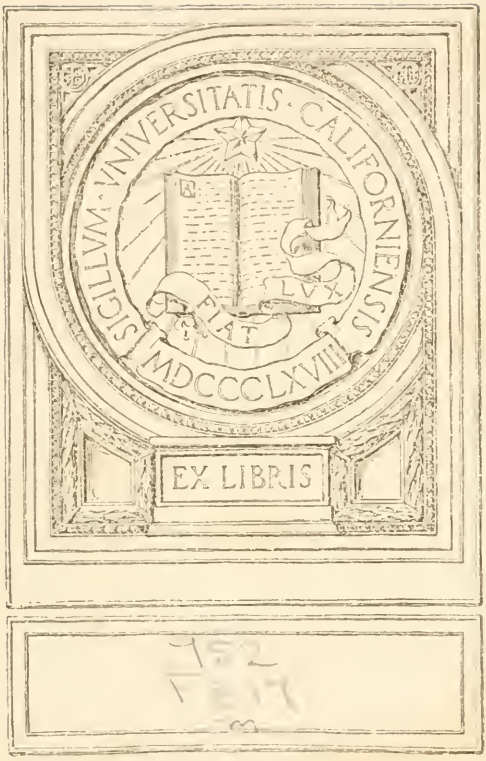
MID-VICTORIAN MEMORIES

R. E. FRANCILLON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MID-VICTORIAN MEMORIES

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BY
R. E. FRANCILLON

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

TO MY NEPHEWS

FRANCIS JAMES, FRANCIS OLIVER, FRANCIS ROBERT

AND FRANCIS EDWARD FRANCILLON

AND TO MY NIECE

LUCY ELIZABETH BERNARD

THESE MEMORIES OF DAYS BEFORE THEIRS

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

R. E. FRANCILLON

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CHAPTER I

Introduction—First impressions—A disciple of Dogberry—"Jacob"—Confusion of persons—Fighting with shadows—A benediction

EVERYBODY who has survived two generations ought to write, and, if possible, to get published, his recollections of them. If, rightly or wrongly, he thinks these to be of any public value, the duty is of course clear; if, in his own opinion, they are of little or none, his neglect of it is not excused by a self-estimate which may be but indolence in disguise. He must not be put off it even by the sincerest conviction that he is a Nobody. He must not say to himself, "Who am I, that *my* memories should possess the faintest interest for any fellow-creature, man, woman, or child?" Even though he be actually a Nobody—then he is all the more likely to reflect the period to which he belongs. The interest attaching to the Somebodies of a period, its makers and its influences, is personal to themselves: for *that* we have all we need in the way of history, biography, correspondence, recollection, criticism: and often,

in the case of the men and women who have "caught on," much more than we need.

But, in getting the impression of a period, it is just its minnows that matter. It is they who in the main compose it; it is they who undergo its influences; it is they who represent it. So our typical Nobody will do well to say: "It is true that I am not an interesting person—except, of course, to myself, and to perhaps the few more, old or young, on whom the least interesting of us can scarcely, thank Heaven, fail to reckon. But I have lived through an interesting time; through what Charles Reade called (in his biggest capitals) This Gigantic Age. To get at the atmosphere of any period, the one and only way is to collect the impressions of those who breathed it: and so here are mine."

But, as no two pairs of eyes see alike, and as all of us use some sort of glasses with lenses ground and tinted by all manner of optical influences—inherited or original bias, education, character, environment, temperament, bodily and mental health, with all the thousand and one other circumstances that distinguish man from man and woman from woman—such observations are of little or no value unless we know something about the eyesight, and a great deal about the spectacles, of the observer. He may be

near-sighted or long-sighted in his outlook: his vision may be wide or narrow in its range. His glasses may be of the magnifying, or of the diminishing, or of the distorting order: they may be rose-pink, or smoky, or grey, or green. So this same typical Nobody of ours must duly preface his "So here are mine" with "So here am I." "Know thyself" may be a counsel of perfection, but one must be singularly stupid if one does not get a good way towards it by a good way short of seventy years.

Mine, then, are the eyes, the spectacles, and the point of view of a mid-Victorian who has not cared to move with the times: who dislikes all change, and is hard to convince that any given case of it can be for the better: who, without being by any means an indiscriminate praiser of the past, fails to find that the world (so far as he knows it) is either wiser, or happier, or nearer Heaven than, say, fifty years ago, or, maybe, many more—and what else really matters? Towards all the characteristic and paramount interests of my present contemporaries—natural science, machinery, sport, games, and advertisement—I am in the position of an outer barbarian. My blank ignorance of each and all is of the hopeless sort that comes from lack of the least desire for knowledge. This is no boast: I fully

agree that "*Soyez de votre siècle*" is the acme of practical wisdom, that everybody ought to know everything, and sympathy to be universal. I merely wish to add a very necessary item to the long list of my limitations, so that any reader who cares to assist at my exercise of memory may the better estimate what sort of spectacles he will have to assume. I will not even promise that the glasses shall never be without a blur. I have never kept a diary, or made notes of happenings, and have preserved but few letters—or rather the accidents and chances of an untidy workshop have spared but few. The result will, I therefore expect, be rather the impression of an atmosphere as experienced by one to whom it is still the breath of life as no fresher air can be; by one of the diminishing few who, though the twentieth century is in its teens, are mid-Victorians still.

My first inhalation preceded Edward VII.'s by rather more than seven months, being on the 25th of March, 1841; my lease of life thus appropriately dating from a recognised quarter-day. It occurred in Berkeley Street, in the city of Gloucester, at one of two houses on the west side afterwards united, and occupied together as the Stamp Office. Berkeley Street was, at any rate within a year ago, a narrow by-way of presumably early Georgian architecture, such as is passed

or traversed without any particular notice in almost any town old enough to possess it. It started southward from hard by the Shire Hall in Westgate Street, which one had but to cross in order to find entrance into the College Green, with its almost too sudden and close a revelation of what I wish I could claim as the first of my Reminiscences in time as well as in permanent supremacy—the Cathedral. I ought to be able to begin them with what ought to have been the first impression of one of the noblest of English Cathedrals upon a child born almost under its tower. I am however bound to confess that the child in question was not affected in this matter by any impression sufficiently conscious to harden into a memory. No doubt I was too familiar from the earliest moment possible with the sight of my majestic neighbour to bestow on it more attention than on anything else that is a part of one's days from their beginning. My very earliest reminiscence is of much too commonplace a kind to have been an afterthought or an imagination from hearsay, as the reported recollections of infancy so frequently are. It is merely of being held in a nursemaid's arms at a window and seeing some pigeons in a yard; and it is still as distinct as if I had nothing else to remember. I record it for the sake of its

bearing upon the earliest possible dawning of conscious memory, for it is certain, from circumstantial details, that I could not have been more than twelve months old. But I cannot altogether accept as conclusive my younger brother's impression, however vivid, that, at less than sixteen months old—he could not have been more—he saw a man hanged. I do not mean that so gruesome a first experience of life was probably but an antedated dream. A certain back room on the top floor of the house in Berkeley Street commanded a view of the county gaol, with its stage for the public and popular entertainment known as the Last Penalty of the Law. On such occasions, our mother used to lock the door of the room and remove the key. Now of course it may be that, despite precautions, one of the maids, inspired by curiosity, may have gained access to the room, and had no scruple in holding up to share the sight a child whom she might justly think too young to make head or tail of what he might not even observe. At any rate, an actual man was actually hanged in public at the date to which my brother's memory refers. But then the potential spectacle of Capital Punishment from one window, unlike that of a few pigeons from another, would be a matter of after-talk; and the effect of even a chance word

on such a topic upon the sensitive imagination of a child old enough to catch it up is easy to suppose.

My own subsequent recollections up to my sixth birthday, whence they start unbroken, are of the character of occasional flashes, with long lapses into forgetfulness between. To the passages of oblivion belongs my inability, or indeed anybody else's, to remember when I could not read. For that matter, I must confess myself strongly disposed to agree with Dogberry that reading, however it may be with writing, comes by nature. I doubt if reading, when consciously learned, ever becomes quite the real thing: the real thing, where books are concerned, being a matter rather of instinct than of reason, of love than of knowledge, of heart than of brain. The fewness of those who will be able to make head or tail of what I can possibly mean, now that something called Reading has been made virtually universal, emphasises, I consider, the soundness of Dogberry's contention and mine. As I am trying, however, to write for as many readers as I can, I will recur at once to such occasional flashes of recollection as convince the most sceptical of us that we, even we our own very selves, are the selfsame persons who were once upon a time less than six years old. This will be the easier,

as they are both vivid and few. There were the two girls, quite big girls, who blew kisses to my brother and myself from an opposite window—whether we returned them or not I cannot recall. A much more interesting experience than any flirtation, however one-sided, I found after our removal from dark and narrow Berkeley Street to a gardened house in the suburban parish of Kingsholm St. Mary. This was my sole right and title to the ownership of a brown owl, Jacob by name, who at first lived in the corner of a cellar, but was afterwards more suitably lodged in an ivy-mantled shed in the garden. I was fascinated by his ceaseless blink, but I don't think that our intercourse ever got farther than his blink and my stare. Did anybody, I wonder, ever get further with an owl? I have always, however, taken a sort of sympathetic interest in the mysterious race of Jacob. It was he, I have little doubt, who indirectly and long afterwards became answerable for a certain "Tale from Blackwood" entitled "A Story of Eulenburg." What became of Jacob is among his obscurities. Then there was my first visit to a place of worship —the Unitarian chapel which my mother, whose family was of that denomination, attended—where I distinguished myself by suddenly setting up a loud wail in the middle, I think, of the

sermon, and proclaiming to the congregation that my foot had gone to sleep. What I most likely said was not "my," but "your" foot; for instead of "I," "me," and "my," it was my way at that period to say "you" and "your" —a confusion of persons without division of substance apt to cause misunderstandings. There was a detestable superstition in those days, now happily extinct, that the supremely honourable titles of "Father" and "Mother" were "ungenteel"—that was the odious term. So "Merriman," I remember saying to the man who did the garden work, "Papa says you are a very lazy gardener"—whereas it was of my own delinquency, or at any rate of the grievance of being charged with it, that I wanted to make frank confession to friendly ears. "That *I* am a very lazy gardener" was what I meant him to understand; and Merriman's complaint to my father of an unjust accusation behind his back was not, I believe, wholly satisfied by an attempted explanation of my peculiar and, so far as I know, entirely original views of metaphysical grammar. My skin was uncomfortably thin in those days—indeed I doubt its having properly thickened, even in these; and I distinctly remember something far beyond a mere misunderstanding—a downright violent quarrel

that came to blows. My opponent was nothing less formidable than my own shadow. I had been presented with one of those brooms made of shavings that used to be hawked about by wandering women from Germany or the Netherlands to one invariable tune:

Ach lieber Augustin,
Augustin, Augustin,
Ach lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg,

ran, as I learned later, the invariable words. The "Buy-a-Broom" woman deserves a niche in the reminiscences of all who can remember her, for her cuckoo-like arrival with the spring from apparently nowhere was among the few picturesque features of an essentially unpicturesque period; and she has long been as extinct as her wares. I doubt if a specimen of these is to be found even in the most exhaustively miscellaneous collection of samplers, warming-pans, snuffers, smock-frocks, and such-like common objects of her time. I am at any rate quite sure that no less fit for an archæological museum would be a child who, with all modern toy-land and book-land for his pasture, could be made happy with a broom of shavings, or a sixth perusal of "Evenings at Home." I was qualifying for the museum by sweeping the parlour carpet with the industry

that I had evidently not spent upon the garden. It was by candle-light, and I was presently aware of another person, close against the wall, occupied in the same way. He amused me for a while, but his persistence in imitating my every movement seemed at last like deliberate mockery. I tried to baffle him by sudden attitudes and antics such as I fancied he must fail to follow, but in vain. Finally, irritated beyond endurance, I went for him, first with broom and then with fists; and so, when my knuckles met the wall, learned how fighting with shadows mostly ends.

The last of these very early recollections that I shall record is of a different order. In a country lane with my father and mother, we met a stately-looking old gentleman who, by something peculiar about his dress, and a great deal about his bearing, impressed me, even at my then age, as Somebody. He stopped to talk, and at the end of the talk laid a hand upon my head and solemnly blessed me. It was James Henry Monk, Bishop of Gloucester, one of the last of the prelates who owed their mitres to their Greek—a race for whom more and better is to be said than is fashionable, now that a Bishop, instead of being the fixed centre of his diocese, is expected to be always here, there, and everywhere at once: not only the centre, but every point in the circum-

ference and in the area as well. I wish I had been old or extravagantly precocious enough to appreciate such a moment of intimacy between myself and the author of the Life of Bentley: that most entertaining of classics, which furthermore brought forth one of the ablest of De Quincey's biographical reviews. At any rate, this is no mere second-hand reminiscence adopted from hearsay. Though the figure of the Bishop is somewhat hazy, it is inseparable from the clear recollection of the profusion of convolvulus blossom among the hedges along the lane.

CHAPTER II

Gloucester in the 'Forties—Queen Square, Bloomsbury—Playgoer and Critic—A Kiss from the Past

THE Gloucester that I remember is scarcely recognisable as the same Gloucester that I still occasionally see. What is now little else than a big railway station, with its attendant factories, its tram-laid thoroughfares, and a bustling population of nearly fifty thousand, where the very Cathedral, though, of course, "restored," has the air of an anachronism, was, as I can remember, a quiet, not to say dull, county town, inhabited by some fourteen thousand folk according to the census in which I was just in time to get counted. As to its place in the railway system, I believe that not till some while later did the Great Western line reach from Paddington in that direction farther than Cirencester, whence a stage coach completed the route. Indeed I have something like a personal remembrance of such a journey: but am not sure. It is just the sort of experience that one is told of, vividly

realised, and thenceforth adopted, with continually growing certainty, as one's very own. The only industry of any importance represented the historic repute of Gloucester for the manufacture of pins. The City walls that so stoutly resisted King Charles I. as to decide the event of the Great Rebellion were scarcely traceable except here and there; the ancient Cross had left its name alone to the starting-point of the four main streets, Northgate, Southgate, Eastgate, and Westgate; and the Gates also nothing but their names. But what with the Cathedral and its precincts; the five old parish churches within so small a space—they were eleven, it is said, before the siege—the old grammar schools and other foundations, the old inns and taverns, old nooks and by-ways, all running over with almost visible history, and steeped in an atmosphere of yet older and older worlds, the ancient British City of Caerloew between the Severn and the Cotswolds was as good a gateway into larger life as anybody with a grain of imagination in him could desire—*then*.

Thus far, the scene of my first memories conforms pretty closely to the general character of the Cathedral cities of those days, and still, to some diminishing extent, of these, in cases of slower and gentler transformation. No two

were essentially alike: history, tradition, natural and other local influences prevented that, and gave to each a strongly marked personality of its own. My impression is that the *Genius loci* of the city where Hooper was burned and Whitefield born and bred was still of the Puritan sort that had turned the tide against King Charles. Nonconformity abounded: the Quaker dress was too agreeably familiar for notice—who, remembering it, fails to regret the weak-kneed deference to worldly fashion that has let it go? But the predominance of Deans and Chapters, the resemblance of one ancient corporation to another, the persistent appearance of the same surnames in the same set of civic annals, the same mode of life, and the same general impression of comfortable and respectable leisure, created a common type out of any amount of individual variety. Gloucester, however, though farther from the sea than is London Bridge from the Nore, shared with London the otherwise unique peculiarity of being at once a seaport and an inland town: thus, in one notable respect, departing from the Cathedral City type, to which it none the less definitely belonged. The tidal and navigable Severn had stamped it with this distinctive feature before its recorded history begins: and, many years before the outset of mine, the nearly

parallel Canal from Sharpness led into the Basin where ships of many nations—French, Italian, Russian, conspicuously the last—unloaded their cargoes, mainly of corn. The corn-merchants constituted a kind of *haute bourgeoisie*. The considerable trade with Russia virtually vanished at the outbreak of the Crimean War: the development of Sharpness as a more convenient and accessible port at the entrance of the Canal has helped to turn the Gloucester of then into the mere big railway station, with appendages, of now. But long before these public happenings I had paid many a visit to the Basin in the companionship of my Uncle Tom, who was not only the harbour-master but a naval lieutenant with a medal for service in the American war of 1813–15, of which I was exceedingly proud. Nor was my wondering interest in the ships with mysterious foreign names, and their outlandish crews, degraded into prose by explanatory lectures; for Uncle Tom was the most silent of men. As a mathematician he had solved problems, and as a fine swimmer he had saved lives: but he never told. I do not think that the foreign sailors were popular. The French sailors, in particular, were accused of the abomination, to the homely wits of the then homekeeping British mind, of eating snails. They had been

actually seen gathering those creatures in sacks, at early morning. The accusation was doubtless true: and I hope they had the occasional luck to meet with some of the grand white snails ancestrally imported by the Roman grandees, and still plentiful among the many remains of baths and villas not far away.

I have casually spoken of Gloucester in the 'forties as dull, but that is only from the present point of view. There is no reason for assuming that it found itself so. Twice or thrice a year the Judges of Assize were met in state at Over Bridge on their way from Monmouth by the High Sheriff of the County, and conducted into the City by an escort of mounted trumpeters and javelin men. The Oxford Circuit ended there: so what with barristers, attorneys, witnesses, jurymen, plaintiffs, defendants, and so forth, innkeepers at any rate, and citizens with lodgings to let, had anything but a dull time. Then every third year Gloucester took its turn in the Festival of the Three Choirs, now among the chief annual events of the musical world at large, and already of high local prestige and fashion, bringing the carriages, toilettes, and purses of the County people into the County town—Worcester, Hereford, or Gloucester as the turn might be. Of this, my own earlier memories have nothing to say. They

are, however, busy enough with the vanished or vanishing excitements that came in my way. There was May Day, for example, when the chimney sweeps, three of the party grotesquely got up as Jack-in-the-Green (a moving mass of foliage), Maid Marian, and Clown, danced about the streets to a pan-pipe and tambourine, the latter serving also for more or less voluntary contributions. There was Whit-Monday, when the Friendly Societies marched in solemn procession with banners and scarves. But, chief among all the glories of the year, was Michaelmastide, for it brought Barton Fair.

I do not know its history : it was in all likelihood originally held just without the old East Gate, but its legal limits had come to include a considerable portion of one of the main streets of the city. What this meant in the years that I am recalling may be judged from its being for pleasure as well as for business, with a " Mop " for hiring farm servants to follow, and that among the privileges of the inhabitants of its limits was that of selling beer without a licence during the continuance of the Fair. The privilege was exercised freely, those who took the benefit of it hanging out a bush for a sign. Whether the proverb referring to the custom referred also to the excellence of the liquor sold

may be open to question. The hiring of a farm servant was for the twelve months following the fair: to many such, Barton Fair was the solitary dissipation of the year, and a man who had drunk nothing better than rough, muddy cider since last "Mop" was not likely to be particular as to the quality of his ale. I believe that, in fact, Barton Fair, old style, was very much of an orgie, where, while the need for a licence, with a C, was suspended, a good deal of license, with an S, was allowed. None the less, beyond any question there was plenty of at any rate outwardly harmless if bewilderingly boisterous entertainment in being taken for a stroll through the fair during the—comparatively—sober part of the day. The stentorian patter of the cheapjacks, the banging of big drums emphasising the vociferations of rival showmen, the cracking of whips, and the startling thud when some marksman won a handful of nuts for his sweetheart by accidentally scoring a bull's eye from a gun-barrel calculated to miss the more widely the better it was aimed—all these blended with the voices of the crowd in a feast for the ear. The smock-frock was still the common costume of country folk, who would have helped Hogarth to many a group by hanging sheepishly round the roulette tables, or more recklessly defying fortune by swaggering

about with ribbons streaming from their hats, to show that they had taken, and evidently spent, the Queen's shilling; for the recruiting sergeant was well to the fore. The same pencil would assuredly—though I am not an eye-witness on this point—have found thoroughly congenial subjects in the interiors of the booths devoted to the consumption of roast pork and roast goose, the special *menu* of the occasion. Among the equally indispensable adjuncts of the festival were the stalls for the sale of "Parliament": unaccountably named pieces of gingerbread in conventionalised shapes of birds, beasts, or fishes, and partially gilded. So another proverbial expression, "to take the gilt off the gingerbread," was visibly explained. I never saw the inevitable fat lady or calf with too many legs—indeed, nothing would have induced me to see them, for the mere thought of any deformity, much more of monstrosity, used to give me actual nausea. Had some untrustworthy guardian taken me into such a show, I should have kept my eyes tight shut till I came out again. There was another thing, too, which I did not like, but could not avoid. I had a most uncomfortably sensitive sense of smell, and the innumerable ropes of onions, apparently monopolising the commerce of the fair, and never out of sight and scent, added

pungency to an atmosphere quite strongly enough flavoured without them.

But there is one personage whom Barton Fair enables me to add to my recollections without any drawback, and of whom I wish my age at the time under remembrance could have enabled me to add more. He was the strolling player: not the regularly engaged and salaried lady or gentleman ("He" does not exclude "She") of the organised tour, but the still extant stroller who might have stepped straight out of one of Goldsmith's pages. I do wish that I had been old enough to make his acquaintance before it was too late. It is something, however, to have seen him, and her, act in a booth at a fair. Perhaps somebody better versed than I in the history of the stage will inform me of the plot and title of the particular drama now in my mind. It could not, as I remember the rapidity of the preliminary business, have lasted many minutes, so that the three unities of time, place, and action must have been extra-scrupulously observed. The great scene was a terrible single combat, at any rate a frantic clashing of swords, between two presumable rivals for the love of a decidedly elderly lady who looked on at the duel dressed in what looked like a not over-clean nightgown and

with dishevelled hair. The effect, however, was somewhat damaged, and the dénouement anticipated. The front bench on which the *élite* of the audience (including myself) sat, suddenly collapsed, and left us sprawling.

It must not be supposed, however, that my earlier outlook was wholly confined by the boundaries of my native city, or that my only notion of the drama was derived from a booth at a fair. My mother's parents, with one of her brothers and three of her sisters (she was the eldest of twelve, the others being married and scattered), lived in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, which at that time, though its fashion was of the past, was a highly respectable—what its early Victorian inhabitants no doubt termed "genteel"—abode for prosperous lawyers and other professional men. Its spacious rooms and broad staircases with polished floors, and its not being on the way to anywhere, gave it a character of quiet dignity in keeping with its denizens. One entire end of the square was occupied by the big house of the Lord Chief Baron, Sir Frederick Pollock; it had need to be big, if his nineteen living sons and daughters were ever there together. My grandfather, a kindly old gentleman who had spent his 'teens in the Navy, held

one of the afterwards abolished and pensioned-off offices of the Court of Chancery; its duties, so far as I could make out, consisted in luncheon, reading the *Times*, and taking snuff, from some time later than ten to some time earlier than four. A next-door neighbour and acquaintance was a solicitor in large practice: and these three may be taken as typical representatives of the Square, presided over, at the centre of its railed and unfrequented garden, by a weather-beaten and peculiarly ugly statue of Queen Anne. I used to be sometimes sent to play in the garden with nobody but Queen Anne for company; and what she and I could possibly find to play at all by ourselves I can neither remember nor imagine. I suppose she is still there; I would go and see, if it were not that places with memories are best avoided. All the life is frozen out of them by the slightest change. No doubt I should find the church in the corner which I regarded with respectful interest, inasmuch as my parents had been married there. The story went that, as the church was no more than ten doors distant from the bride's home, her carriage, in order to maintain the full prestige and dignity of such an occasion, reached it by making twice the round of the Square, and this in a fall of snow. The only house out of keeping

with the spirit of the place was one tenanted by some Sisters of Mercy, exciting in me a curiosity that nobody seemed willing to satisfy. Perhaps nobody was able. I think they were regarded as undesirable aliens: a blot upon the otherwise immaculate respectability of the Square.

Not all, however, of my early memories of life in London are cased in the almost præ-Victorian mahogany round which Bloomsbury used to dine at five. They include the Lyceum of Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews: truly a stride of seven-leagued boots from where I left myself sprawling in the booth at Barton Fair. Of Mathews, on that first occasion, or of the parts he played, I can recall nothing definite but a flow of words too fast to follow: of Vestris, in the extravaganza of "The Seven Champions of Christendom," only a glorified vision. But I knew all about the Champions of Christendom from another source: and, in spite of the excitement, and the vision, and the scenic splendour, I know that I was a good deal put out by what seemed to me the unpardonably ignorant liberties taken with the familiar legend. I never passed through the stage-struck phase: not even my first pantomime inspired me with a minute's wish to be a Clown; and in matters dramatic I have always been deplorably hard to please—

even when constrained to admit an unsurpassable best, I have nearly always wanted something more and better. Yet I think my first experience as playgoer and critic to be not uncommon. Were I to dramatise a legend or fairy tale I would stick as tight and close to the received text as if I myself were still a child—a real child, that is to say, to whom the cleverest up-to-date adaptations, however splendidly produced, are without the soul of the stories which, having read or heard, he wants to see exactly as they were read or heard—nothing left out, nothing needlessly put in.

If I record so trite and inevitable a recollection as a visit to Madame Tussaud's, then lodged in Baker Street in almost homely style, it is for a special reason. I had been taken there by one of my aunts, and as we were going out a little old lady in black, standing at the door of the gallery, stooped down and kissed me. It was Madame Tussaud herself: the original Madame, who had known and modelled Voltaire, who was born in 1694. That kiss therefore sets but a single life between myself and one who was born 219 years ago. Only nine years more would as closely have linked me with the reign of King James II., the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the consequent emigration of my Huguenot ancestors from the banks of the Rhône.

CHAPTER III

My father and his brothers—Serjeant Talfourd—Edward Lear—Origin of "The Book of Nonsense"—His celibacy

JAMES FRANCILLON, my father, born in 1802, was the son of an officer in the Navy who died, on service, at Lisbon in or about 1818, and the youngest of six brothers. The eldest of these, Francis—our eldest sons are always christened Francis, and sometimes all the other sons as well—was quite recently, and perhaps is still, remembered at Banbury, where he settled and practised, as an able solicitor with a talent for advocacy, who, out of sheer animal spirits, defied ordinary professional *convenances* with a zest that acquired for him the privilege of having his eccentricities taken for granted, as in the natural order of things. He was, in fact, a strongly developed specimen of what in the time of Queen Anne (herself, not her statue) was known as a "humorist": one who follows his own humours, without caring a straw what may be thought of him or them. That he of all men had married a strict, old-fashioned Quakeress is almost as

humoursome a meeting of extremes as that such a Quakeress, of all women, had married him. He was the author of a treatise on Punctuation, based on a theory, more original and ingenious than practically useful, of his own. I never saw much of "Uncle Frank." My most vivid portrait of him is taken from a later chapter of my reminiscences than the present, when we walked together along the High Street of Oxford, I in wig and gown, he in his habitual substitute for a great-coat—a primitive sort of poncho, contrived by roughly cutting a head-hole in the middle of an old horse-cloth of conspicuous pattern and colours. The four brothers between the eldest and youngest all belonged to the Navy. Uncle Tom I have already mentioned. Uncle John, with the title of Commander, was, in my time, in business at Gloucester as a shipbroker. Neither was married. My uncles Charles and Philip were before my time. The former had died in Newfoundland; the latter had been drowned by the capsizing of a boat in Portsmouth Harbour. Yet, though thus both my grandfathers and four of my five paternal uncles were sailors, and ships among my earliest memories, I never for a moment felt any more inclination for the sea than for the stage.

My father was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, and obtained considerable business on the Oxford

Circuit, occupying chambers in Southampton Buildings off Chancery Lane during Term, and practising locally at other times. His speciality, unusual and therefore advantageous at the Common Law Bar, was the Law of Real Property: and he has a place in the Dictionary of National Biography as the author of "Lectures Elementary and Familiar on English Law." He was among the first-appointed County Court Judges, and soon afterwards removed from Gloucester to Cheltenham; a change of surroundings which, to myself at least, was like going into another, but I cannot add better, world. For, transformed as it is, I still retain a native affection for the ancient and historic City of the Cathedral and the Severn: none for the fine and fashionable upstart eight miles away, though my home was there for some eighteen years. I was *of* the one, never more than *at* the other.

Assize time would sometimes bring a Circuit friend of my father's over those eight miles to dinner. The visit of one of these I especially remember. I can see him now, as he stood on the hearthrug, punchy and red-faced; but his voice has faded away, though I remember voices better than faces as a rule. This was Serjeant, almost immediately afterwards Mr. Justice, Talfourd, then leader of the Oxford Circuit; the

friend, executor, and biographer of Charles Lamb —the only instance I can think of in anything like modern times of the alliance of legal and literary reputation without injury to either. Clients are naturally mistrustful of counsel who have other mistresses than their profession; but probably Talfourd never missed a brief by reason of his notorious addiction to the tragic muse. I do not think I had ever heard of Lamb. But I had read "Ion," "The Athenian Captive," and "Glencoe"—and here, before me on the hearthrug, was the man who had written them. The successful performance, or rather the performance at all, of these graceful declamations in blank verse is inconceivable in these days; but it was both possible and actual in those of Macready. I think, by the way, that "Glencoe" was in prose; but am not sure, as I have never seen it since I saw its author. I wonder if I am the sole surviving reader of the tragedies of Thomas Noon Talfourd. I should not be surprised if I were. Not for these will he be remembered by others, but as the friend of Lamb, for his parliamentary championship of the rights of authors, and for his sudden death on the bench at Stafford while, in the course of his charge to the Grand Jury, pleading for a closer sympathy between the rich and the poor.

My second author was of a very different order. I am certainly not alone in affectionate memories of Edward Lear. When quite a young man, living in London as young men without means or any prospects better than Alnaschar's do manage to live, he was introduced into my mother's home circle by her brother Robert, then studying art—my only near relation neither sailor nor lawyer—under (I think) Hulmandel. He at once became an ever welcome visitor : an almost brotherly and sisterly relation grew up between him and the group of bright young girls who then filled with life the house in Queen Square. It was on one of my visits there that I met him for the first time. Marriages, two of them entailing emigration to an island in then distant and remote Ontario, had thinned the group by that time, and the years had not passed over those who were left without a sign. But such changes as these were not of the sort that affected Lear. One has heard a great deal of late about "genius for friendship." The rather worn-out phrase might well have been invented, in its original freshness, for him. Of his ever-increasing multitude of friends I do not believe that he ever lost one except by death ; a new friendship never lessened an old one ; and it is impossible to imagine his having ever made an enemy. His corre-

spondence came to be immense—he had at last to settle a scheme for its restriction, lest it should absorb the whole of his time. Whether he kept to such a scheme is more than doubtful. However that may be, he never ceased to write at frequent intervals to my mother so long as both were alive—long and intimate letters, free from the by no means brilliant jocularity of comic spelling which makes his published letters to Chichester Fortescue such wearisome reading. Only an occasional grotesquely coined polysyllable gave the Learian *cachet* to really amusing and interesting accounts of what he was doing or planning. They were a pleasure to us all. Alas, that such would-have-been valuable contributions to my reminiscences should have disappeared—I cannot think inadvertently, much less intentionally, destroyed.

Lear's love of children, and his immediate attraction for them, was of the essence of his charm. That first meeting of mine with him is memorable inasmuch as, while talking to my aunts, he amused himself for my benefit by making a pen-and-ink drawing of an Eastern landscape, with camels and palms. I did not listen to the talk: I was wholly absorbed in following the strokes of the pen. I treasured it as long as the wear and tear of nurseries and

schoolrooms allowed. Much more interesting, however—indeed they may take rank as pieces of literary history—were Lear's occasional visits to us at Cheltenham; for we children, my brother, my sister, and myself, were delighted eye-witnesses of the production of some of the earliest pages of the first "Book of Nonsense;" both pictures (so to call them) and rhymes. The current tradition is that these were dashed off for the children of the fourteenth Earl of Derby. No doubt many of them were, for Lear numbered at least three successive earls among his patrons —which in his case invariably meant his attached friends; and his first commission, as an animal painter, had come from Knowsley. But equally without doubt many other children had their part in the fun; and I can answer for the very considerable part accorded to us three. We possessed a good share of the original drawings, made while we stood by the artist's knee, and their attendant "Limericks" were household words, long before there was any thought of their collection and publication. Alas, again! When the general collection came to be made, our particular one was added to it, and, translated into print, was no longer our very own, that we had watched flow for *us* from the pen. *Apropos* of the connection of the House of Stanley with the

"Book of Nonsense," Lear used to tell how, soon after its publication, he was travelling in a railway carriage opposite a family party engaged in enjoying its fun. The father proceeded to explain to the children that its actual author was the Earl of Derby himself, under the pen-name of Edward Lear: a very slight disguise of "Edward, Earl," "Lear" being of course an obvious anagram of "Earl." The veritable author's assurance that not only was Edward Lear the real name of a real person, but that he himself knew him well, had no effect beyond provoking a little temper. "I have it on the very best authority," was the unanswerable retort to all he could say. Even when he produced a visiting card, and declared himself to be the man, it was evidently to be regarded as either a lunatic or an impostor. Considering the popular preference of fable, the wilder the better, to fact, it is really surprising that so first-class a myth as the identity of the Rupert of Debate with Derry-down-Derry should have failed to fix itself ineradicably in the public mind.

Lear's friendship was an inheritance from generation to generation; and after I came to London in 1863, never again to leave it, I seldom missed seeing him on any of his visits there. It was on his last visit that I saw him for the last

time. My mature impression of him is that he was, in spite of any superficial evidence to the contrary, a melancholy man, weighed down by a sense of solitude. His innumerable friendships were, I think, too much in the nature of a crowd: and there is no such loneliness as is to be found in a crowd. His gentle and affectionate nature needed marriage, especially if it should give him children of his own instead of all the world's. But to this there was the oddest of all odd obstacles. He had an ingrained conviction that he was too ugly for any woman to accept him. No doubt he *was* ugly. His impressionistic self-portraiture on the first page of the "Book of Nonsense" as the "Old Derry-down-Derry, Who loved to see little folks merry," is scarcely a caricature: and his plainness of face was made the more emphatic by his nearness of sight, awkward slouch, and a style of dress which can only be called careless by courtesy. He may have thought that dress was no concern of one for whom it could do nothing. But though, as a true humorist, he could make himself his own butt, that perverse conviction of his unquestionably rankled. How absurdly, how pathetically perverse it was, experiment would soon have taught him: to say nothing of such precedents as those of Wilkes and Mirabeau to

the effect that a man may be as ugly as he pleases—or doesn't please. But then Lear was constitutionally shy: which is more than can be said of Wilkes and Mirabeau. He would, I am sure, have been a happier man could he have comfortably acquiesced in destiny, like a more than plain-featured but excellent friend of mine, beside whom I was sitting at a smoking concert when the splendidly handsome hero of a recent notorious scandal came into the room. "Ah," said my friend out of his abundant charity, "but just think of all the temptations that beset a handsome man like that! We don't know anything about them—I and you." I did not make the obvious retort of "Speak for yourself, if you please": the reflection was so evidently meant, in all simplicity, to help me share his satisfaction in being—as he fancied—immune from the peril of pleasing ladies' eyes.

But to return for a last moment to Lear. Had he been a veritable Apollo to look at, I do not believe that he would have been a whit different from what he was—one in whom nobody who knew him could imagine a deed, word, or thought that was not kind, generous, unselfish, and pure. I wish I did not fear that while giving so much pleasure and happiness all round, he somehow left himself out of the deal.

CHAPTER IV

Cheltenham in the 'Fifties—"The capital of India"—Colonel Berkeley—Blues and Yellows—A clerical autocrat—"Speculum Episcopi"—An imperfect anagram—Sons of Robert Burns—The "Prance"

CHELTENHAM, in the early 'fifties, was in a state of transition. George III. had been its tutelary patron, and his shade still lingered. But it was passing. The balls at the Assembly Rooms were still presided over by a regularly appointed Master of Ceremonies, supported by subscriptions and fees; but Colonel Kirwan was the last of his line, and, it is to be feared, suffered a serious falling off of the guineas of residents and visitors during the latter years of his reign. There were still some half-dozen Spas or Pump-rooms, but their visitants had become very few and very far between. Anglo-Indians were still numerous; indeed they had become so pre-eminently characteristic of society there that "The capital of India is Cheltenham" was a boast not altogether without foundation. But they no longer came for the reputed effect of the

waters upon disordered livers. They came now because they found there a congenial colony ready made, where they could talk and think India with their fellows after what at any rate used to be the manner of their kind. Few must have been the residents who had not either themselves been in the Company's service, or had no son or brother in it or intended for it, or at any rate some near Indian interest or connection. The grass widow was a social institution, and the care of children sent home from India as virtual orphans was among the industries of the town. The development of Cheltenham into a scholastic centre was not yet, but it had begun. The Ladies' "College," with its thousand or more pupils from all parts of the kingdom, was unforeseen even in a dream. But the hideously named "Proprietary College" for boys (the one school being no more a "College" than the other) had started in 1841, with the late Lord James of Hereford for its first pupil, to whom only ten years later it had added some four hundred more.

Quite apart from the Anglo-Indian element, the winter, which was the season, imported a strong muster of the Berkeley Hunt—Earl Fitzhardinge's, famous as the Colonel Berkeley of the annals of George IV. Collectors of *causes*

célèbres will remember that he failed to satisfy the House of Lords of his legitimate title to the Earldom of Berkeley, in succession to his father, the fifth Earl, and was compensated by a new creation under a new title. Indeed such a course was almost imperative, according to the notions of his time, in the case of the Lord of Berkeley Castle, with its great estates and its eventful history. He was a great noble, and looked it, and made himself felt to be one : a great Whig noble, and therefore of the then most pronouncedly aristocratic type and temper. His appearance in Cheltenham, always in the stately solitude of his postilion-driven carriage, was not rare ; but he took no part in its society, or in its affairs, beyond appointing its Member—for that is what it came to. He was, I suppose, too great a county magnate to care for or to condescend to the society of a watering-place ; and, on the other hand, not even an Earl's patent had caused Colonel Berkeley of the Regency to change his spots and his hide. His visits were mysteriously spoken of, with sigh or grin as the case might be, as very private affairs indeed—not that he cared a straw for whatever people might say or think of whatever he might do. He was not so much the Lord Lieutenant of the county as its King. Of his brother, the Hon. Craven Berkeley

("Hon." as an unquestionably legitimate son of the Earl to whose possessions his questionably legitimate brother was heir—it was a family history of curious complexity), who represented Cheltenham through many Parliaments, my recollection is much more personal, but I cannot add more interesting. My father, as having been an ardent parliamentary reformer of 1832, and as now one of the few Whigs of public prominence in a prevalently Tory society, naturally knew him well: and I remember him well as a good-looking, pleasant-speaking person who took good-natured notice of Me. I felt myself a champion of the Right when I stood beside him at a window of the George Inn, the Liberal head-quarters, and watched the turmoil of polling day in the High Street below.

What delicious excitements those polling days were, before Ballot Acts, and Corrupt Practices Acts, and so forth, deprived them of all the glory of the fray! The "Yellow" band parading the streets to the brass and drums of "British Grenadiers": the "Blue" band to the drums and brass of "Bonnets of Blue": both, when they met, competing for a triumph of sarcastic noise with the taunting strains of "Oh dear, what can the matter be": the flaunting of rival banners: the hourly declaration of the progress of

the poll, turning one's heart cold with suspense as each hour drew near, and then making it exult or sink according as one's candidate went ahead or fell behind: the universally worn rosettes of orange and green, *our* colours, or of the odious blue of the other side: the open voting, in full sight and hearing of a cheering, jeering, and hooting crowd: the instant assurance of victory or defeat precisely at the last stroke of four, thus leaving a long evening free for carousal—it was all very bad, no doubt, and often with worse to follow. All the same, I like to remember wearing a rosette (though, in my present opinion, of the wrong colour) through an old-fashioned election: nor am I convinced that the ballot-box is any security for independence, or that the vote of an elector who does not sell it only because nobody dares buy it, is of any more political value than when the "Man in the Moon" paid, not with unsubstantial promises, but with money down. There was always a contest at Cheltenham; but the result in my time was invariably a "Yellow" victory, save once, when a Sir Willoughby Jones, the "Blue" candidate, was declared to head the poll. As, however, he was promptly unseated on petition, the incident scarcely amounts to an exception. How or why a Tory borough so pertinaciously

returned the Whig candidate, I cannot tell. No doubt the Berkeley Hunt, and the money it brought into the town, was of importance to the local tradesmen; but so partial an explanation of the paradox does not go far.

The influence of Berkeley Castle, however, was paramount in politics only, and these, except at election times, did not run high. The real ruler of Cheltenham was the Rev. Francis Close, then its Rector, afterwards Dean of Carlisle. The patronage of the living was vested in Simeon's Trustees; and Close, an expert in human nature as well as in rhetoric, made the Evangelical pulpit of St. Mary's a sort of papal throne. The extent of his social influence may be gathered from the fact that, in a town whose whole business was amusement, the theatre where Sarah Siddons first attracted notice was perpetually closed—the pun, as expressing the whole state of things in a single word, needs no pardon. No dramatic performance, other than amateur, was possible during his reign. The races, too, had to be banished to an inconvenient distance, well out of the range of his sway. He could not abolish the balls; but that he diminished attendance, and otherwise affected their success, is certain. No doubt his field of operation gave him some special advantages. His parish

swarmed with Indian colonels, and I have observed that, be the reason what it may, the typical Indian colonel is Puritan and Evangelical by nature. His prestige too, as a preacher and recognised representative of his school, would attract many well-to-do persons to Cheltenham for other reasons than health or pleasure. The Oxford Movement had not as yet made any conspicuous intrusion. It was only just visible at St. John's, where one incumbent was strongly suspected, in spite of his excessive corpulence, of eating no butcher's meat on Fridays, and where his successor, the Rev. G. Roberts, was ostentatiously guilty of the enormity of preaching in a surplice. There is some uncertainty among collectors of rare books as to the anonymous authorship of that more witty than reverent treasury of clerical anecdote, "Speculum Episcopi." I can set the uncertainty at rest. Its author was the Rev. George Roberts of St. John's. We were not of his flock, but we knew him well, and very delightful was he to know.

Too far remote, politically and socially, from the Anglo-Indian colony to be counted among its members was the Earl of Ellenborough, though he had been Governor-General during the two-and-a-half eventful years following the massacre of Cabul, though his tall, lean figure,

curly locks, and fresh complexion—too curly and too fresh, some insisted, to be the gifts of unassisted Nature—were familiar objects, and though his seat of Southam was but three miles away. One of the incidents of his Governor-Generalship had been his restoration to Guzerat of the sandalwood gates of its ancient temple of Somnauth on General Nott's capture of Ghuznee, whither the gates had been transported by a previous captor of Guzerat more than eight hundred years before. This *coup de théâtre*, executed by a vainglorious proclamation that provoked a good deal of contemporary ridicule, was not forgotten among the many neighbours of his who had served the Company during his reign; and it was noted, as a fine stroke of satiric humour, that "Somnauth" and "Southam" would have formed a perfect anagram but for the absence from the latter word of a single letter. Imperfect as it was, Southam was quite near enough to keep Somnauth's memory green. Of the Anglo-Indian colony proper we were best acquainted with Colonel and Major Burns, sons of the poet: quiet elderly persons, with no paternal symptoms, except that one of them used to sing some of his father's songs, unaccompanied, in a thin, elderly voice, but with considerable feeling. One of them was a widower with a musical daughter.

But whether it was the Colonel or the Major that sang, and whether the daughter's father or uncle was Colonel or Major, I was never clear. Then there were the Menteiths, father and son. The son had an especial interest for me, for I had fallen under the fascination of "Waverley," and "Old Mortality," and "Redgauntlet," and "Rob Roy" at a very early age indeed; and he not only possessed some relics of the '45, but was himself so far a Jacobite as to break out with "The Prance—The Prance!" (as he pronounced what is written "Prince") whenever anybody teased him by speaking of the Young Pretender. I also called myself a Jacobite; my heroes were Clavers and Fergus MacIvor Vich Ian Vohr; I had precociously supplemented "Waverley" by an eager and unquestioning study of the Memoirs of the Chevalier Johnstone; and I made out that King Victor Emanuel of Sardinia represented the title of the House of Stuart to the British throne. On the last point I, of course, blundered badly. But I must not let my first Jacobitical propensities anticipate the contents of a much later chapter.

CHAPTER V

"The Greater Wisdom"—School: old style—The Exhibition of '51—Cheltenham College—Some schoolfellows: Lecky, Professor H. Jackson, F. W. H. Myers, Briton Riviere, and others

If I introduce into my recollections a working watchmaker's daughter, who came into them as a daily governess, and went out of them as the bride of a Congregationalist minister, it is, first, because I like to remember her for her own kind sake; secondly, and chiefly, because of the depth and breadth of the gulf between the early education of children as it was possible when she conducted it, and the same thing now. Her impressively dignified name was Sophia Major—the Greater Wisdom. She gave us children lessons for a couple of hours every morning at home; and, in my case at any rate, her curriculum would now be considered insufferably meagre and dull. It consisted of the accidence of the old Eton Latin Grammar learned parrot-wise; a translation of the Abbé Rollin's Ancient History, in many big volumes,

and Whiston's translation of Josephus, read aloud; and—that was all. I remember a single spelling lesson, out of a once-brought spelling book, in which "yacht" proved a puzzle; but it was otherwise unneeded. And I think I was supposed to work an occasional sum, up to simple subtraction. The morning's school ended with a chapter of the Bible, chosen by oneself and read to oneself in silence. My most frequent choice was the hundred and seventeenth Psalm—I need not explain why. But, dry, meagre, and lifeless as all this sounds, and unadapted to what are commonly supposed to be a child's needs, I enjoyed my lessons, especially Rollin: the dull old Abbé's dull histories of Babylon or Macedon were anything but dull to me. I think I must have caught from Scott some of the faculty of putting life into history; of realising that its makers and actors are not dead names buried in books, but real men and women once as alive as I, and, in their characters and actions, still as alive. The faculty seems to be dying out under the deadening influence of the great god Cram. Then, too, I was intensely interested in the Greater Wisdom's talk, though it must have been far above my head—perhaps the more intensely for that very reason. She was a Wesleyan; and her favourite topics were denominational differ-

ences and the errors of the Church of Rome. One result was a mental muddle out of which, somewhere about my eighth birthday, I had set about the idea of a Church which should bring all differences and controversies to an end. I was much attracted by what I had been told of the Quakers: I had, as I have said, read Josephus —his "Antiquities of the Jews"—and, of course, "Ivanhoe." So my Church of the Future was to be, as I should describe it now, a combination of Quaker Quietism, Hebraic ritual, and some esoteric mystery, as suggested by my acquaintance with Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert. It was also to have a distinctive costume. Unfortunately there were three points at which the scheme broke down. I could not hit upon a sufficient secret, nor upon a suitable dress, nor—most important of all—upon a satisfactory name for the Church that was not to be.

Moreover, my ecclesiastical speculations were interrupted by my transference from the tuition of the Greater Wisdom to the desks and forms of a neighbouring school, where I found myself one of some sixty school-fellows of all ages; some boarders, but the greater number living, like me, at home in the town. It had a good repute at that time, but its claim to a place in these pages is as an illustration of sweeping

change : as an example of a then quite ordinary type of private school, no longer to be found. The master, who impressed parents by his burly good looks and apparent *bonhomie*, resembled Shakespeare, as I came to perceive later, in the littleness of his Latin and the lessness of his Greek. But he made up for any deficiencies of that sort by the engagement of one fairly competent usher, and of a wholly competent bundle of canes. I never made personal acquaintance with the latter. But it was a common thing to see a boy seized by the collar of his jacket and, for some infinitesimal offence, publicly and savagely flogged all over the schoolroom, to the scattering of spectators and the upsetting of forms, till the splintered cane could do its work no more. My detestation of injustice and cruelty was as strong then as now, and much more sensitive, and I thought I perceived a blend of both, especially as the cane had a noticeable preference for boarders—that is to say, for those without friends whose attention it might be impolitic to draw. Then, too, his partiality for raw onions at his midday meal offended my fastidious nose, and his little stock of coarsely facetious anecdotes, trotted out when he was in a good humour, my scarcely less fastidious ears. His, or rather his usher's, curriculum was about

as meagre as that of our ex-governess, and much more dull: the Eton Latin Grammar; Valpy's Latin Delectus, of which every word had to be separately and minutely parsed; the Greek accidence; the Facetiæ of Hierocles in the book called Analecta Græca Minora; a very little Euclid—whether anybody passed the Asses' Bridge I think unlikely; a great deal of English dictation; and daily practice in the Rule of Three. I have called it meagre and dull, but I think it was thorough within its limits—at least in the hands of the usher in question. After he carried his consumptive tendency to Australia the school, gradually but regularly, fell off in numbers and altogether ran down. I do not think that more than two dozen out of the sixty boys were left at it when my time there came to an end.

About that time occurred an experience that ought to be, but is not, among the principal of my memories—a visit to the Great Exhibition of 1851. I was by no means too young or too ignorant, certainly anything but too apathetic, to take an intelligent and enduring interest in what I saw, and was the talk and wonder of the world in a way with which not even the most ambitious of its subsequent imitations can remotely compare. But it remains in my mind a mere formless blur of colour, heat, and crowd,

with a delightful iced drink for its solitary detail. We took it on our way to Littlehampton for the summer holidays; and far more distinct than all the fondly supposed triumph of Peace and Industry (though in fact the harbinger of over sixty years of almost incessant war) remains the feudal keep of Arundel, with its guardian owls. That was an excitement: and my strong impression is that I was heartily bored by the glories of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Anyhow I have never visited any other: perhaps that is why.

Two tutors succeeded my schoolmaster. The first was the Unitarian minister, the Rev. John Dendy, who had been through Manchester New College and the University of Berlin, and was thus a German scholar rather earlier than German scholarship obtained its vogue. I do not think that I or my brother made much way with the grammar of the language—that I did not, I more than think; but I have never ceased to be grateful to him for initiation into the wonder-world of its poetry. For many years since I entered "The Castle by the Sea" attempts to represent German poetry by English verse were among my pleasures. As things German are not in popular favour just now, I will here say at once that, in spite of my French extraction,

I have a sympathetic liking for them—save always for German prose. Dendy, on leaving Cheltenham, was succeeded in our tutorship by one William Buckell, a mathematician of St. John's, Cambridge: and then came five years of Cheltenham College. "College," though under protest, I must needs call it, in accordance with the common-sense doctrine of Lord Chief Justice Coke, that one's name is that whereby one is known.

Though no older than myself when I entered it, Cheltenham College already mustered six hundred boys, representing the six hundred shares, each of which conferred upon its holder the right of a single presentation. It had not been modelled on precedent. Instead of the usual division into forms, there were twelve classes on the classical side, the first class corresponding with the sixth form elsewhere, one half of it under the Principal's immediate tuition, the other half under the Vice-Principal's; the lowest classes included children of six and seven. There was also a modern side—I suppose among the earliest and certainly among the most successful of the kind—with a Head Master and staff of its own. The majority of the boys boarded in the masters' houses, in numbers varying from one or two up to seventy or eighty,

under as much or as little discipline as the house-master might please—of general discipline there was, out of school hours, virtually none. There were no prefects, no monitors, no bounds, no compulsory games; and the school was too young to have evolved those traditions which are a kind of discipline in themselves. Not for at least two years after my entrance had it a chapel of its own, borrowing the use of a neighbouring church for the week's sole service on Sunday afternoon. When not actually in our class-rooms we day-boys at any rate, and those in the small houses who were practically day-boys, knew no law or surveillance but of their own homes; and the then atmosphere of Cheltenham, as I have previously tried to convey it, was certainly not an ideal one for boys of the public school ages. Of course I am speaking strictly and solely of my own time. Neither has the Cheltenham of to-day any recognisable resemblance to what Cheltenham was before education became its staple, nor the College as it is to the thirteen-year-old experiment without experience of sixty years ago.

The second-appointed Principal, who had, in fewer than those thirteen years, raised its numbers from a mere handful of local pupils to six hundred from everywhere—the Rev. William Dobson—

was a really memorable personality; no list of the great schoolmasters would be complete without his name. He had come from Cambridge with the prestige of a Fellow of Trinity, of third classic in the year when Shilleto was second, and of some pugilistic championship—I forget of what kind. It must, however, have been of a heavy-weight order, for he was a man of commanding presence; and this, added to an imperturbable temper, and a talent for cold and cutting sarcasm, made the more incisive by a curious nasal twang, kept masters and boys—even, I believe, the Board of Directors—in a state of distant awe. He did not mix with the former, nor I believe in society of any kind, though he had daughters who did; his only known recreation consisted in long up-hill tramps on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, at express speed, with an iron bar for a walking-stick, and a little mathematical master trotting and panting at his heels. The apparently silent companionship would have been comic, had it been possible to associate anything comic with the idea of the Rev. William Dobson, M.A. With the five hundred and eighty-five boys who were not immediately under him in his first class, he seemed to give himself no concern. Probably he held that their morals and conduct were the

proper business of their parents or house-masters, and was wise enough to appoint class-masters whom he could trust to do their duty, and then to trust them entirely—the grand secret of all successful organisation on a large scale. His authority was unquestioned and unquestionable, and this without the support of the cane, though a flogging consequent upon a master's report was not quite unknown. He never preached or ministered in the chapel. In short, he devoted the whole of his energy, and it was immense—even, as proved at last, beyond breaking point—not to the education of religion or morals, but to running his class for University scholarships; and his candidate seldom failed. In this matter, under his *régime*, Cheltenham became second to no school in the land, and it was thus that it was made. The Vice-Principal was a senior classic and former Fellow of Trinity—no less a person than the Rev. Hubert Ashton Holden, the compiler, as every schoolboy and ex-schoolboy knows, of the "Foliorum Silvula," a volume which transcends its purpose as a collection of passages for rendering into Latin verse in being the best of English anthologies into the bargain. But my personal recollection of him is confined to his sandy whiskers; I wish it ran to more.

Reminiscences are not necessarily confessions.

If they were, these would remain unwritten. But before I proceed I feel bound in honour to make one confession, though it should deprive me of the esteem of every right-minded reader. It is this—I have not, and never had, a particle of affection for my old school. Perhaps I was a little unlucky at starting, entering in the middle of a half-year ("terms" were terms unknown), and so having no companions in the trials of a new boy. I was developing a morbid shyness from which I was to suffer for many, many years to come: from which I cannot say that I suffer still, only because I have learned to take it philosophically, as something that one can't get rid of but that doesn't matter. I had not a single popular quality. I made none of the friendships that I envied; possibly because I so consciously envied them. I played no games: they were not compulsory: and the consequence of this, among other things, was that I took no part in the school life out of school. I had my own unshared pursuits and interests—plenty of them; so much so that I regarded school hours and the evening's preparation as inflictions to be brought to an irreducible minimun of evil. So I need hardly say that my promotions were slow, and my place in my classes seldom high. Yet all the while I would have given everything I can think

of to be what others were, or seemed to be, so that I might not feel myself looked upon as a negligible oddity ; for of course to think oneself thought about is among the chief torments of the shy. I was, however, less alone than I believed. Exactly opposite to our house lived a weird mathematical master who boarded two or three of my schoolfellows. One of these was Lecky, the historian ; the same quaint, gaunt, shambling figure of a boy as afterwards of a man. I knew him no more than by sight, though our daily way to and from school was the same. And according to the Life of him written by his widow, he looked back upon Cheltenham College not with my mere lack of affection, but with downright detestation, for no better reasons than have compelled my own confession. The reasons were bad enough—but there they were.

I came, however, to feel less like a fish out of water after a translation from Plato's "Gorgias" had sent me at a single bound, and out of the regular course, among the Principal's own fifteen. To have had such an immediate result, the translation must have been good indeed, and have shown more promise than I was able to fulfil in the remotest comparison with my companions in the Principal's side of Class I. Its head, with fixity of tenure, was Henry Jackson, now Regius

Professor of Greek at Cambridge. The second seat was no less permanently occupied by Frederic William Henry Myers, of psychical research celebrity. He had taken the place he held at seventeen when he first entered the school at the age of thirteen: an instance of precocious scholarship rare enough to be worth recording. Nor was he a mere scholar. He was our poet; and while still a boy was a Tennysonian enthusiast who could show reason for his faith at the time when quite intelligent men and women scoffed at "Maud," and found "In Memoriam" obscure. On the practical value of his excursions into the occult world, opinions may and do so legitimately differ that I am entitled to express my own, founded as it is upon the likeness of the boy to the man—namely, that he was gifted with real imaginative genius misapplied to subjects only befogged by his speculative subtlety and literary charm.

These were the acknowledged heads. I remained among the vertebræ of the tail, while making a kind of career for myself in Modern History, on which the first and second classes had weekly lectures from one of the masters of the latter, and in what we called Divinity, which was mainly another branch of history under another name. But these were not Greek: and

I fancy that Dobson must have been disappointed in me. An any rate the only event for which he entered me was an Exhibition at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I failed; but as one successful competitor was to be a Senior Wrangler and the other a Double First, my failure was not surprising. Of my victors I shall have occasion to speak later. Meanwhile, though my imaginary incapacity for intimate friendship remained as strong and as effectual as if it had been real, I was on quite good terms with my class-fellows. I hope I shall not offend any of them by suggesting that a certain priggishness was among the marks of our distinction from the outer and inferior world. Among other distinctive marks had been the fashion of a monocle, whether needed or not; but that had gone out before my time: the only wearer of an eyeglass was Jackson, by whose near-sightedness it was unaffectedly required. But we were still aloof. The playground knew us not, with the exception of tall and handsome Brandt, who was in the eleven, besides coming next in the class to Myers: so in this respect I was no longer alone. I have spoken of the lax discipline of the school at large, and of its then prevalent vocabulary the less that is repeated the better. But we were punctiliously well-behaved, and,

among us, an oath or foul word was unknown. Some of us were keen politicians; two or three had been caught in the ritualistic tide that had risen higher since the departure of the Rev. Francis Close to the Deanery of Carlisle. Another thing that brought me somewhat out of my shell was a Debating Society, open to the first two classes, that discussed politics, history, and literature every Monday after morning school. I find from its records that its original President and Secretary were, respectively, Alsager Hay-Hill, of whom more hereafter, and Sir Charles Young, afterwards associated with Lady Monckton as a star of the amateur stage. My impression is that, with the exception of Myers, Jackson, and fervidly fluent Francis Lloyd Bagshawe, our collective standard either of eloquence or argument was not high. Had it been, I am quite sure that I should have remained dumb. As it is, I can only wonder at the recorded evidence which assures me that I addressed the House no fewer than eighteen times. At any rate we took ourselves and our subjects of discussion very seriously indeed, all the forms and courtesies of debate being punctiliously observed. We could unbend, however, on occasion. The close of a Session was celebrated by an elaborate supper at one of the

hotels, with punch and song, and without any supervision or control.

Of the school-fellows whom I have not mentioned, John Morley (Lord Morley of Blackburn) was too much my senior, and "Bob" Reid (Lord Loreburn) too much my junior, for me to have come in contact with either of them. So far as I remember, or am acquainted with future careers, the most distinguished of my earlier contemporaries and class-fellows was Robert William Raper: my most vivid recollection of the present Vice-President of Trinity, Oxford, being his appearance one morning with a mass of many-coloured bruises instead of a face—what was the condition of the other fellow I did not see. I am not forgetting Briton Riviere, R.A.: only doubtful whether to count him as a school-fellow. I am almost sure he never wore the "mortar-board" with the scarlet tassel that distinguished us from the boys of the Grammar School, whom their Elizabethan foundation had admittedly entitled to the more academic black tassel, to the exclusion of a new-fangled affair without any foundation at all. He attended the studio as pupil of his father, William Riviere, who was our principal drawing master: and as I, among my other occupations, wasted a regrettable amount of time, sepia, and Payne's grey

in the same room, and as our homeward ways lay partly together, I became well acquainted with both father and son—at any rate with the father, for it was almost out of the question to become acquainted with anybody else when he was to the fore. William Riviere was an artist of real merit in the grandiose "history" style, as was recognised by his commission for the frescoes in the Oxford Union. No doubt he was also a competent teacher for a competent pupil; but his flood of talk was rather bewildering to such as I. A favourite aphorism of his, "The eye doesn't see what the mind doesn't look for," bewilders me still, because I know, for a hard and painful fact, that I see a great many things that I should never dream of looking for, and would very much rather not see. And his dictum, when discoursing on perspective, that "the point of sight is the eye of the spectator" would, were it translated from paradox into practice, have a wild result indeed. But there was something stimulating about him: and it was impossible not to have a cordial liking both for the father who talked so much and did so little, and for the quiet son, who talked so little, and has done—what he *has* done.

CHAPTER VI

A visit to Ireland—Modern language teaching : very old style—A German tour—Llandudno and Bournemouth in the 'fifties—"I'd e'en let them bide"—An old-world village

So much for school memories : of which I have made so much in bulk out of so little of importance because I am quite sure that they will not in the least resemble those of any present-day schoolboys who fifty years hence will be writing out theirs. They will not be able to remember the great gulf fixed between masters and boys ; the frigid toleration, which had scarcely yet taken the place of the active discouragement, of games ; the lack of organised discipline—though in that respect the Cheltenham of my time was not typical of the great schools of any period ; the admission of little children, who ought to have been, if not in the nursery, at any rate at a school adapted to their age ; the absence of physical training ; the contempt for modern languages and their teachers ; the cultivation of Latin and Greek as the whole duty of boy and man. But if, in

explaining at such length my lack of affection for my old school, I have suggested an unhappy boyhood, the impression thus conveyed is exceedingly wrong. Were it worth while, I could, for my own pleasure, tell of very good times out of school: and the bad times in it did not, at most and worst, occupy more than thirty hours a week for thirty-nine weeks out of the fifty-two. It is my present business, however, to remember only such incidents as tell of after-changes. There was, for example, my only visit to Ireland; it was made, with my father, to an old and intimate friend of his, the Ven. Charles Strong, Archdeacon of Glendalough, who lived in Dublin, and was continued to some great friends of the Archdeacon at then remote Rathdrum. Our host here was one of two medical practitioners popularly known by their respective partisans as "The Red Doctor" and "The Black Doctor"—he, the Red, and his tribe of stalwart sons who seemed to have nothing to do and to do it as if they liked it, ably represented a national hospitality which unquestionably remains unchanged. Unchanged too, I may trust, are the surrounding beauties, wild or mild, of County Wicklow, "the Garden of Ireland," in spite of their having since become more accessible through the substitution of the railway train for

the "low-backed car" and of the motor for the train. The passage from Holyhead to Kingstown then took seven hours, and often many more. It was my first crossing of the sea.

My second, two or three years later, was from St. Katherine's Dock to Hamburg, and the hours it occupied were fifty-two. A passage from Liverpool to New York has occupied barely more than twice the time. We, my brother and myself, had not dropped our German when we lost our first tutor, but took lessons in it at home, right through our school-days, from one Herr Wilhelm Jung, who combined the vocations of teacher of languages and nursery-gardener. He was a really delightful teacher, with an amiable and vivacious vanity that one can only suppose to have been acquired in France—it was certainly not German: and a boyishness that soon made us boys his familiar, possibly somewhat over-familiar, friends. Among his merits, too, was a poodle who had been taught tricks, and whose unusually extensive repertoire sometimes left but little time for irregular verbs. Of course there ought to have been no occasion for Herr Wilhelm Jung. There was a master at the College for teaching French and German to some of the middle classes: nobody above the third was supposed to have time for such unclassical

frivolity. But the choice of the solitary modern language-master was curiously limited. He must not be a Frenchman, however capable, because of the fear of the Board of Directors that he might be a Jesuit in disguise. So, in order to ensure the requisite bilingualism, the appointment had been given to an Alsatian, with a name German enough to vouch, in the Directors' opinion, for his character as a genuine Lutheran, an atrocious accent, and an equally atrocious temper of the kind that renders a foreigner a glorious butt for British boys. His lesson simply meant an hour of impudent provocation on their part and, on his, of pitiably impotent rage. And there was nobody to interfere. It was only French and German—what did they signify? I believe they received more respect on the Modern side of the school, but I do not know.

But I have been a long time on the way to Hamburg, whither my brother and I accompanied Herr Wilhelm at the beginning of the last of my summer holidays: he to revisit long unvisited relations and friends; we to see something of "abroad" and to pick up what acquaintance we might with German homes and ways. It was in the main a thoroughly unconventional tour, such as I have always preferred to well-frequented roads. From Hamburg we went straight to

Berlin, not yet the overgrown and overgrowing capital of an empire, but with still something of a homely and provincial atmosphere that was anything but sweetened by a system of open sewers, wide and deep, and filled with wholly black and semi-stagnant ooze. Thence to Danzig and Königsberg, where one might more than merely fancy oneself in mediæval Poland, and where ringleted Jews, in caftan and gaberdine, emphasised the illusion—if illusion it were; for the middle ages are not easily killed. At Königsberg we stayed with a sister of Herr Wilhelm, married to the master of an iron foundry. They lived at the works, where the great steam hammer never rested night or day; how they and we slept soundly through moments each of which was a bang that set the house trembling is more than I can explain. Our host, like most people who indulge a large extravagance, prided himself on an economy. His expenditure on cigars must have been prodigious, for his emission of their smoke was as ceaseless as the blows of his hammer; it was not interrupted even during meals, which took the form of a puff and a mouthful, and so on to the end. But then, "See," he boasted, "what I save in matches!" His method for effecting this compensation was to light his earliest cigar at the forge and then one from

another, each from the stump of its predecessor, throughout the day.

Thence back to Berlin ; thence by Halle to Arnstadt, where the railway came to an end ; and thence by sarcastically termed *Eilwagen*, as if one should call a tortoise a hare, to the quaint, out-of-the-world little town of Schleuszingen, in the heart of the great Thuringian Forest, Herr Wilhelm's native place, and still his widowed mother's and an unmarried sister's abode. I believe they had never left it in all their days. Here we made our longest stay : and among the choicest of my memories is the kindly reception of two English lads, the first and only English visitors within human knowledge, into this simple and leisurely life of that little pine-scented forest town. Though simple and leisurely, it was anything but dull. There was the yearly shooting festival, of which the principal item was not so much the marksmanship as the concluding banquet attended by everybody of the male sex who was anybody—and everybody was somebody in so small a social circle : *the* doctor, or *the* lawyer, or *the* forester, and so on. No doubt a longer stay would have revealed some at least of the besetting sins of all little country towns, when self-absorbed, where everybody discusses everybody else's affairs. Meanwhile it seemed to us

that a friendlier place would be impossible to find. It was the doctor who on our occasion presided over the feast, and, when the feasters had satisfied appetites so healthy as to suggest that even a solitary physician was one more than was needful, and had settled down to the solid business of the worst of tobacco and the best of beer, conducted the singing in parts of the folk-songs that display the veritable soul of the race whence they have sprung. For, despite philosophies, politics, critical æsthetics, and all such superficial muddles, it remains, deep down, a very simple, sincere, and homely soul. Then there were excursions, always in pleasant company, for which everybody always had plenty of time; and, on general principles, one must indeed be dull in oneself to find a forest dull.

Our homeward route was more conventional, by way of Erfurt, Frankfort, the Rhine, Cologne, and Brussels. But these denote changes. The Judengasse, the Jews' quarters of Frankfort, was still to be seen and remembered; and railways and factories had not even begun to rob the Rhine of the whole of its romantic charm. I do not care to dispute the opinion that they have substituted better things. But I could not honestly feel them to be better when, many years later, I went by rail along the Rhine.

Other such changes come in a crowd. Llandudno, as I knew it, was little more than a mining village; the railway came no nearer than Conway; the Great Orme was in a state of nature; there were no shops, and unless one were staying at the hotel—there was one even then, for enterprising visitors who regarded such uncivilised conditions as merits—there was considerable likelihood of spending a day without a dinner; no trivial misfortune in such appetising air. I have been told by one whose visit was but a summer or two earlier than ours that the only accommodation he could find for himself and his family was in a miner's cottage, and that when provisions ran short he would take to the road, stop any likely woman who carried a basket, and if this contained a fowl or any such matter on its way to the hotel or other expectant consumer, compel her to stand and deliver on what he considered equitable terms. However, things had ceased to be quite at that pass, for two or three bathing-machines were already a consequence of the hotel, and one of these was utilised, at any rate once in the week, for the sale of joints of mutton. A first visit to Bettws-y-Coed was to the primitive Bettws of David Cox, while yet unbrushed and uncombed, a sleeping beauty as undreaming of steam as of petrol: a later was

to a town with its streets, its railway stations, its hotels, nay, even its rank of hansoms: I shall assuredly never pay it a third. Bournemouth, too, is only known to me as a village in a pine-wood, with no railway station nearer than Poole, four miles away, and its suburb of Boscombe as a flowery solitude without a human dwelling, and probably not another human being, in view. Of all nonsense, none is more nonsensical than the notion that an appreciation of natural scenery is of modern development, or commonly sincere. If we loved it only half as much as we profess, obviously we should leave it alone—at least here and there, and now and then. A fine story of "Johnny" Lang, the brother of Andrew, is told in the Reminiscences of their aunt, Mrs. Sellar (I quote from memory, and the familiar "Johnny" is hers). When he was ten years old, he was one day sitting on a hill-side in earnest contemplation of the wide and varied landscape below. After a long and evidently thoughtful silence, "I know," said he, "what I would do with all yon bonny lochs and burns if they were mine." "And what would you do with them?" asked his aunt, naturally supposing that he had been evolving some boyish scheme of irrigation, or application of water power. And Johnny's answer was, "I'd e'en let them bide."

The happiest reminiscences, however, of my school days are of another order. The husband of one of my mother's sisters—very, very dear is her memory!—was the tenant of two large farms at Yattendon in Berkshire, midway between Newbury and Pangbourne, six good miles from either rail or town. Yattendon has latterly emerged from an immemorial obscurity into literary history as the sometime abode of a poet —Robert Bridges—in the list of whose works appears a "Yattendon Hymnal." In my time, at any rate, it typified the undiscovered, purely agricultural village of the south midlands, such as one comes across in novels, but less and less often out of them. The cottages straggled round a green, over a corner of which hung the rudely painted and weather-beaten sign of the Royal Oak; it looked as if some trooper who had charged at not distant Newbury might have set it up so soon as the King enjoyed his own again; and not a day later. There was the squire's house hard by, not very regularly occupied, for the squire and his lady had some pretensions to fashion, observed the London season, and were without sons or daughters to turn a house into a home. There was the church, with its unkempt churchyard, and its high, baize-lined pews, where there was no risk of being caught

napping while the black-gowned rector, the squire's brother, preached sermons that suggested, without wholly resembling, the bones in the valley of Jehoshaphat. For, although notably dry, they were by no means very many, there being but one service in the week, alternately morning and evening; his neighbouring rectory of Frilsham receiving the like attention on the alternate evenings and mornings. Nor is the comparison of the bones so far-fetched as it may have seemed, inasmuch as they were the subject of the only sermon of his that I can recall. He was a worthy old gentleman, who doubtless did his duty by the some three hundred bodies and souls (counting both parishes together) under his unassisted care: of Dissent, or of any other dissatisfaction with the established order of all things, no visible symptom was to be found. Then, under his more immediate care, were the bodies and souls of his own brood of sons, with whom we two boys, of much the same ages, were on friendly and companionable terms. And, above all things, were the copses and glades of the commons that stretched far and wide around—Ashampstead, Frilsham, Bucklebury, Coldash, and the rest—so infinitely delightful to explore; so certain of never being wholly explored.

Many years later, indeed when well into middle age, I cycled from Newbury to Pangbourne for the sake of passing through the village which I had never seen since my teens. Well—there were still the six Lombardy poplars at the end of the garden; that was all right. But instead of the well-remembered copse at the hill-top was a big new mansion; one side of the Green was occupied by the conventionally up-to-date buildings of a no doubt much-needed school; the Royal Oak had been smartened, and its sign repainted; the churchyard had been decently trimmed; the church restored. All was, beyond question, a change for the better. . . .

But this, from first to last, is a chapter with a moral—Never, if you can help it, revisit a place where you had a good time long ago.

CHAPTER VII

Trinity Hall—"Ben" Latham—Henry Fawcett—Leslie Stephen—Alsager Hay-Hill—The Chit-Chat Club—Alfred Ainger—Robert Romer—Bryan Walker—The original "Tom Brown"?—Charles Dilke—Walter Scott Coward—Charles Kingsley's inaugural lecture—Cambridge: a contrast—Beauty and the Beast

BEFORE leaving school I had eaten my first term as a student of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn. The next milestone in my memory is my entrance as a pensioner—a term, as every Cambridge man knows, meaning the direct opposite of its ordinary signification—of Trinity Hall, and I was presently admitted a Scholar on the same foundation.

The "College or Hall of the Holy Trinity of Norwich," to give it its full original designation, was, during my undergraduate days, in a state of transition. From its earliest period its speciality had been neither mathematics nor classics, but the Civil Law, a full third of the class lists of that faculty having been supplied by this one college, and nearly half its first classes. Only three of the thirteen Fellows were required to

be in orders; and this condition was not indispensable. The Master was invariably a layman and a lawyer: at any rate since the mastership of Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester—and he was esteemed the greatest canonist of his time. The College of Advocates known as Doctors' Commons was established in its historic quarters by a Dean of the Arches, Dr. Hervey, who was also at the same time Master of Trinity Hall; and the same two offices had been likewise united in Sir Herbert Jenner-Fust, the immediate predecessor of Dr. Geldart, Master throughout my time. In short the college had been among the principal nurseries of Doctors' Commons until the latter, by ceasing to exist, to some extent deprived the former of its special reason for existing. There was a legend that a Don from another college, dining as the guest of the senior tutor at the high table, some days after the general gathering at the beginning of Michaelmas term, inquired of his host, "And when do *your* men come up?"—for his view from the dais was of an elsewhere empty hall. "They *are* up; there they are," answered the tutor, triumphantly pointing to a solitary undergraduate feeding in a remote corner. However this may be, Trinity Hall had become one of the smallest of small colleges, when the Rev.

Henry Latham was imported into one of its three clerical fellowships from its gigantic neighbour Trinity. Were I writing for Hall men only, of my own and the following generations, there would be no need of another word to remind them of how "Ben" Latham—as for some lost reason he was invariably called—devoted himself to what he considered the welfare of the college of which he was senior tutor, Vice-Master, and finally Master in succession to that great jurist Sir Henry Sumner Maine—thus breaking the line of lay and legal Masters for the first time since Henry VIII. was King. He literally lived for Trinity Hall: his whole ambition was to obtain for Trinity Hall a great and distinguished place in the University at large: and, being a man of single purpose, business capacity, patient tact, and a way of inspiring respectful if slightly humorous affection—for he had certain small oddities, such as an inability to pronounce the letter R—a considerable amount of success, at any rate of what he considered such, was not slow in coming. I say "of what he considered such" because, not being himself a Hall man, he had no compunction in sapping the tradition and altering the atmosphere that had given the Law College a distinctive character of its own. I have met

with men older than myself, and even with younger, who held that Latham had spoiled the college, as something *sui generis*, by putting it in competition with all the others. They felt as if a happy and contented family party had been broken up, or rather swamped by the intrusion of strangers ignorant or careless of its hereditary ways. But it was a proud day for the college, as well as for "Ben" Latham, when, in one and the same academic year, 1862–3, Trinity Hall hailed its first Senior Wrangler; won, for the first time, a double first; and last, but by no means least, rowed head of the river. That it also monopolised the first class in law was only in the natural course of its unregenerate times.

When I entered the attic rooms wherein I was to "keep" for over three years to come, the number of undergraduates had already risen to seventy, and to the position of sixth among all colleges exclusive of Trinity and St. John's; and of these certainly not more than a dozen took their degrees in Law. The seventy are now more than doubled, so well does success succeed. But that is by the way. The old state of things had still left its quite perceptible traces. The Master and several of the Fellows had been of Doctors' Commons. Among the some-

time Fellows was Dr. Abdy, the then Regius Professor of the Civil Law, the twelfth of Trinity Hall, in unbroken succession, since 1663; and we had a Law lecturer of our own. Three valuable studentships had been founded for graduates intending to be lawyers. Our gown was scarcely distinguishable from that of the Bar. And among the undergraduates were still extant the names of generations of Doctors and Proctors—Jenner, Bayford, Tebbs, and others, to represent the *ancien régime*. The Hall was, in short, still, to some extent, *a* legal college, though *the* legal college no longer. And I think that a very large proportion of my contemporaries were subsequently called to the Bar, though their studies, or non-studies, had ceased to differ from the same things elsewhere. I was of the transition: one who specialised in Law.

Besides "Ben" Latham, the Fellows in habitual residence were two. And they were two of whom crude undergraduate recollections are of infinitesimal value, considering their respective titles to be remembered for what and by whom. For one was Henry Fawcett, presently, in spite of his total blindness, to be the University's first Professor of Political Economy on a permanent foundation, and subsequently Postmaster-General —as everybody remembers, or at any rate knows.

He had won his high place among the Wranglers only three or four years before my entrance, so was still young in age; but his robust good sense and clear-cut, decided opinions, emphasised by a downright, somewhat dictatorial manner, did not give that impression. His total blindness was obvious at once, and he was led about by a lad who, I think, also acted as his reader. But there was a manful defiance of his misfortune which was obvious too. I do not think that he drew round him any undergraduate circle: if he did, it must have been very limited: but he was certainly regarded as a prophet in his own country—so to call ourselves—long before his name became a household word (there are Fawcett Clubs, as well as Gladstone Clubs, still), and the household word an influence if not a power.

The other was the mathematical lecturer: and he was Leslie Stephen. I never attended a lecture of his, not being in the mathematical line. But I came to know him—as who of us did not?—quite well: that is to say, in my case as well as an undergraduate who is shy and reticent can know a Don who is reticent and shy. Not that there was anything Don-like about Stephen. No doubt his prestige as among the most eminent founders of the Alpine Club,

and his enthusiasm for the river, were of signal assistance to Latham in extending the attraction of the Hall. The river indeed became a passionate kind of cult, with every member of the college, from the Master down to the newly entered freshman, for a professed if not practical votary. The rowing club and the college were one and the same: its black and white colours were worn as of course on the heads of men whose hands had never grasped an oar, though such hands were rare. I believe that even gyps and bedmakers were not exempt from the infection. And the river had no rival. I do not think that we cared for cricket; football had not yet left school, or golf St. Andrews; lawn tennis was still uninvented. So the boats, in them or with them, were practically the sole resource of those of us who were not expert loafers, or satisfied by way of exercise with the monotony of the Trumpington Road.

I am sure that our Dons were well advised in encouraging the cult, even in its exaggerated form. It inspired a healthy state of public opinion, to the effect that a man who was not in the running for a Tripos could still do something for the honour and glory of the Hall, or, at the least, take an eager interest in its honour and glory. No college in Cambridge was so

saturated with the *esprit de corps*. The exaggeration was shown in a slightly disdainful attitude towards every other, as necessarily and inevitably inferior to ours: there was even a flavour of bad form, if not of actual disloyalty, in having many acquaintances outside. There was but a single migration during the whole of my time: and it was regarded with an unaffected wonder that such a thing could be. But the exaggeration was harmless: the essential part of it was sound and altogether wholesome: and that part was pre-eminently represented by Stephen. Speaking for myself, I never was in a boat but once, and that was as bow of a scratch pair, with an equally inexpert stroke, and a coxswain who, very early in the race, sent us into a bank and out of the running. And I came to have many out-college friends; and have never, I think, been much influenced by my surroundings of any kind. But "never much" does not mean never at all: and for the influence of Trinity Hall I had cause to be grateful. It drew me more out of myself; it made me feel myself one of a body to which I owed something for its own sake as well as my own. It gave me the definite purpose in which I had hitherto been wanting. If I could not row, I could read: and this substitution the tone of the place fully

allowed. The great thing was to do *something*—to row, preferentially, but something anyway. I was certainly very far from Stephen's ideal of a Hall man, or indeed of any man, for his ideals were high: and not only so but, as everybody who knew him knows, he lived up to them: and this, no doubt, largely accounted for a more silent and deeper influence than was due even to Alpine and suchlike honours. But, though with so little personal claim upon it, I found no short-coming in his kindness, either then or thereafter.

It seems odd to remember Leslie Stephen, of all men, as a preacher. But we had an occasional sermon in chapel—once a year, or so: and it was preached either by Latham or Stephen, who held one of the clerical fellowships, and had not yet resigned his orders as inconsistent with his agnostic position. There was certainly nothing parsonic about him, even then. My rather vague impression and only recollection of the one or two sermons of his that I heard is that he seemed to be doing something against the grain, but as well as he could, since it had to be done: that they were shorter than was even yet usual, and admirably composed. My only other remembrance of him in connection with the college chapel is of an occasion when he read the evening service to me, and I the lessons, as the

scholar on duty, to him : not another soul being there. Even under Latham's ruthless treatment of old traditions, we were a very lay college still.

My opposite neighbour on the same attic floor was a former schoolfellow, Alsager Hay-Hill. I had hitherto known him only by sight and reputation ; but here we soon became unceremoniously free of one another's rooms. Hill had been regarded at Cheltenham as very much of a madcap. He had a turn for practical joking, and once had printed and posted all over the town an announcement that at such an hour on such a day the Rev. Charles Spurgeon would deliver an open-air sermon in Sandford Fields on the text "What came ye out for to see?" The greatness of the consequent crowd no doubt delighted Hill, but it was probable that it did not come to see in him the perpetrator of the hoax, or he might have had a ducking in the Chelt that crawled conveniently by. At Cambridge he was defiant of conventionalities. He never, or very rarely, went near the river ; his reading was, I should say, the irreducible minimum required for getting through ; his out-college friends were legion. There seemed to be nobody whom he did not know, and know all about besides. Then—by way of crowning eccentricity—he was a sonneteer of no ordinary taste and skill. But, despite all his eccentricities

put together, he was popular, and no wonder, for he was an always amusing companion, with a keen sense of the ridiculous, and able to put himself at once on the best of terms with anybody and everybody in the whole wide world. He was by no means a fish out of water, though not such a fish as is bred by the water into which he had strayed. But it was less strange to find him in Trinity Hall than that he should be the son of an old-fashioned Norfolk squire. Some time after leaving Cambridge he transferred his energetic attention from poetry to philanthropy, and may claim to have been the pioneer of the Labour Exchanges. He started, and personally conducted, a "Labour Bureau" for the purpose of bringing together employers and unemployed. It was on too small a scale to be a permanent success; but the first practical attempt to solve in this manner one of the most formidable industrial problems is certainly Hill's.

Meanwhile, it was in his rooms one evening that he imparted to me a scheme of another kind. This was the formation of a society of members of all colleges who should meet in each other's rooms in turn for literary discussion. Of course there was no novelty in such a notion, which was no doubt inspired by the historic precedent of the Twelve Apostles. But our number was to be

unlimited, for Hill loved literature, discussion, and society, and could not have too much of any one of them ; and here we should have them all together. So there and then we two constituted ourselves the Chit-Chat Club, with Ἔπεα πτερόεντα for a motto and, for a badge or device, an Owl—that must have been the suggestion of Jacob's quondam master, I feel sure. Another reason of his for making his, now our, club as wide open as possible was to counteract the self-satisfied exclusiveness that characterised the Hall. The curious thing about the project was certainly not that it was thought of, but that it succeeded. Hill knew many eligible members ; before long our numbers threatened to become inconveniently large ; and on my latest visit to Cambridge, after some thirty years of absence, I heard that it was actively flourishing still. But I also gathered that its then remote origin had become considerably blurred ; so I put it on record for the benefit of any future archæologist who may undertake its investigation. Among its early members was Henry Jackson of Trinity, already mentioned in connection with my memories of school. I remember the derisive chuckle of the future Regius Professor of Greek when somebody propounded the rash statement that Edgar Allan Poe was, in addition to his

other merits, a great scholar. But we made many rash statements when we were young: possibly almost as many as when we are old.

On the same staircase, the tenant of the rooms immediately under mine was Alfred Ainger—the ugly little man with a voice in speech that must surely have been bestowed upon him by a fairy godmother in her most gracious mood. It was indeed a veritable charm. It gained for the quaint-looking and as yet unknown young man, without impressive presence, personal influence, or University honours, the Readership of the Temple Church from out of a numerous body of highly eligible candidates for that desirable post as soon as the Benchers, fastidious and not normally unanimous critics, were once brought under its spell. It was virtually a matter of course that one who could thus charm all hearers should be chosen Master of the Temple on the death of Dr. Vaughan: an office to which a Canonry of Bristol added itself in the natural sequence of things. I am very far indeed from meaning to suggest that Canon Ainger, the fittest biographer and editor of Charles Lamb as himself a humorist of the same fine and subtle flavour, and noted for his social as well as vocal charm, was *vox et præterea nihil*. But his voice was his fortune. Other men have been more favoured

by Fortune in their opportunities, and have made the most of them to boot, and yet have had to be content with the merit of endeavour. What I mean is that he did not endeavour ; that I cannot make the idea of effort fit into my recollection of Ainger. A little rudimentary ambition would assuredly have secured him high classical honours: he was satisfied with an ordinary degree. I cannot call his edition of Lamb a labour of love, because to call a congenial pleasure a labour seems a contradiction in terms. His cult of Lamb, whom I thoroughly believe he knew by heart, was the result, not of any mere literary liking, but a genuine case of the inborn sympathy of two minds whose outlook upon life made them well-nigh one. The "gospel of work" was no more Ainger's creed than Lamb's.

Different indeed from these others of the four occupants of our staircase was the tenant of the rooms opposite Ainger's and below Hill's. For it was "Bob" Romer, who was to be Lord Justice Romer at no distant time. No flatter contradiction to the popular notion of a future Senior Wrangler can be imagined. He was no mathematical monomaniac in spectacles revolving problems even while taking his solitary grind along the Trumpington Road. Romer by no means scorned delights: and, so far as he must

have lived more or less laborious days, it was without visible sign of labour. He was something of a dark horse, though I do not suppose that his carrying off the blue ribbon of the mathematical course came as a surprise to his trainers. You would take him, at first sight, for a rollicking young fellow, careless of anything but the moment, and winning instant liking by good looks and high spirits. Nor would the impression given by a second or third sight differ much from the first, save that the first liking would have grown. He could pull an oar, wield a bat, and sing a song, took his part in everything that was going on, and was a thoroughly good fellow all round. There was no more popular member of the Hall ; certainly none more worthily so. I am sure that when his name headed the list of Wranglers, our pleasure in his success was fully as much personal as corporate. Among the guests at the big supper in the Combination room to celebrate the occasion was his uncle, Mark Lemon, the then editor of *Punch*. I thought he looked like it : and also as if he were going to be as amusing as, at that period, I supposed an editor of *Punch* bound by his very nature always and everywhere to be. Whether the promise given by his Falstaffian figure and unctuous smile was

fulfilled, I was too far from the head of the table to be able to tell. He did not seem to have much to say, but he certainly smiled well—as indeed well he might, seated at a festival wherein his own nephew and prospective son-in-law was at once so popular and so central a figure.

Of sadder sort is my recollection of Bryan Walker, high among the Wranglers of whom Romer was senior, and high in the first class of the classical tripos besides. If he did not scorn delights, he at any rate shunned them: and I fear that he lived not only laborious days but laborious nights to follow. He seemed always tired. His degree gained him a fellowship at Corpus; he lectured there, and, being ordained, undertook the duties of a small Cambridgeshire living at the same time. The last time I met him was as his guest at the Corpus high table: and I thought him something more than tired. Soon after that the strain with which he had achieved his success began to tell. His physician told him that he *must* rest. "Doctor," he sadly answered, "I can't: I don't know how." And then he died.

Meanwhile the unashamed idler was lazily drifting towards his Canon's stall, and the man who knew how to play as well as to work was on the road that led him to the seat of a Lord Justice of Appeal.

A very typical Hall man was Hughes, a brother of "Tom" Hughes, who has been taken by some to have been the original of the latter's Tom Brown. Unsubstantial as such identifications almost always are, there was certainly a reminder in Hughes's modest manliness and muscle of his brother's hero. He, also, died much too soon; in his case I suspect the strain of the river as the cause. His last term being my first I could not have much acquaintance with him; but I had some, for on my very first Sunday morning in Cambridge he asked me to join him and some half-dozen others in a cross-country "grind," a kindly attention to an unknown freshman, pleasant to remember of him—though I should add that the "grind" itself was rather severe for the likes of me. R. A. Bayford, so long eminent at the Probate and Divorce Court bar, was also in his last term. For the opposite reason, he being in his first term when I was in my last, I have but little recollection of Sir Charles Dilke, who might well have given Trinity Hall a Prime Minister but for circumstances over which it cannot be said that he had no control. All my first remembrance of him is that once having instant and urgent occasion to appear before some University official in cap and gown, and not having my own at hand, I went

for a loan to the rooms nearest at the moment. They chanced to be Dilke's, where I found a pale and slender lad who proved gravely obliging—yes; pale and slender, despite all eye-witness of those who knew the friend and pupil of Gambetta in later times. And that little is all. But it was not a little thing that those of his contemporaries who did know him never lost faith in him. It was after the scandal that put him out of the running for the highest political office that he was present at a banquet given by the Master and Fellows to members and former members of the college who had graduated previously to a certain year. He spoke—ineffectively, it seemed to me—but he had no cause to complain of his speech's reception or of his own. I sat next a County Court Judge who had been of his year, had kept up an intimacy with him ever since, and was convinced, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that he had been the victim of an atrocious conspiracy. I have no opinion on the matter. My only knowledge of the Crawford and Dilke case is derived from newspapers; and opinions based upon condensed reports, however ably done, of trials at which one has not been present, are of course worth less than nothing. Worth a great deal, however, are the opinions formed of a man by

his contemporaries as to what he will be and do, not be and not do, at the age when character is the most plainly legible. Dilke had the loyal belief of the men who, themselves of the highest sense of honour, had known him best and longest, as well as of the lady whom he married.

My most intimate college friend and daily companion was Walter Scott Coward, afterwards one of the ablest of H.M. Inspectors of Schools. Nor did our intimacy cease with our comradeship at Cambridge ; for, though our subsequent intercourse was subject to long dormant periods, as must needs be the case when the lines of life diverge, it remained substantially the same for nearly fifty years. We were recalling our old times together only a few weeks before he died, and so left me without the last unbroken link between me and them. On leaving Cambridge he had for some time been tutor to the eleven-year-old son of Lord Blantyre, who had married a sister of the Duke of Sutherland and was consequently brother-in-law to the Duchess—pre-eminently *the* Duchess, Queen Victoria's most memorable Mistress of the Robes. One morning master and pupil were relieving the monotony of lessons in too noisy fashion to be aware, till too late, of the entrance of the Duchess upon the

scene. "Mr. Coward," said her Grace, "I believe that you were engaged to teach Greek: not how to jump over chairs." He described the majesty of her rebuke, all the more awful for its calm, as making him wish that, instead of teaching the art of jumping over chairs, he had learned that of vanishing under them.

During my first year, Charles Kingsley was appointed Professor of Modern History. The choice of so imaginative a historian, however brilliant and popular, for the chair, was not generally regarded as happy, especially as it was more than suspected of being due to Court favour. Cambridge, though she has bred so many poets, from Chaucer to Tennyson, is nothing if not prosaically and mathematically accurate where accuracy is required. None the less, his inaugural lecture in the Senate House was delivered before an overflowing audience eager or curious to see and hear the man whose influence had been a very actual and active part of history indeed. As the address, however, proceeded, the air unmistakably froze. His argument was, in effect, that while human history is, in the main, a chain of the inevitable consequences from more or less ascertainable causes, yet that this general law fails to act when some strong man comes to break the chain. History, therefore, while to some extent

a science, is to a very much greater made up of the lives of great men, as being a law to themselves. He may have been partially right: such-like theories usually are. But he was sadly unlucky in the comparison of his law of history to the law of gravitation, which he declared to be "suspended" when a ball is prevented from falling to the ground by the interference of a man's palm—as if it were not an unalterable law of gravitation that enables the palm to interfere: as if, had Newton caught the legendary apple in his hat, the law of gravitation would have ceased for one instant to act and be. I was not the only auditor who, at this point of the address, noticed Whewell's rugged features relax into a grim smile. How far Kingsley fulfilled the promise of his peroration to devote the rest of his life to the teaching of history, and, if so, how numerously or otherwise his lessons were attended, I never knew.

As among the survivors of the some sixteen hundred undergraduates who could claim to be fellow-students of Edward VII., I wish it were in my power, for my readers' sake, to provide them with a good dish of fresh gossip about the then Prince of Wales. I have not a morsel; and I much doubt if anybody has more—any, that is to say, worth cooking. Everybody knows how and

under what watchful guardianship he lived at Madingley—which is not Cambridge: how specially he was lectured: and how the real life of the place was represented for him by a few acquaintances of his own college, Trinity, not chosen by himself, but carefully selected. Among these I can recall two—the Duke of St. Albans, because his nobleman's gold tassel and gown to match were seen about a good deal: and a nephew of the Master of Trinity (Whewell at that date), because he was my own schoolfellow Frederic Myers. But he cannot help me in this matter because, first, I cannot imagine him as capable of gossip; secondly, because, if such a thing were imaginable, our sets, and I may say ourselves, were so far apart that our intercourse was not long in dwindling down to virtually none.

They could hardly, however, differ more than the outward and visible Cambridge of these days differs from the Cambridge of those. The dingy debating room of the Union had to be looked for, and perhaps found, in a sort of mews. What is now the principal residential quarter was then a tract of open fields, dividing the quite distant and isolated railway station from the town. The colleges, in their architecture and arrangements, were still as they had ever been within the memory of their oldest members. There was no

Girton or Newnham: the female student was absolutely unknown. The married Don had just become possible, but had not yet begun to be actual. Of course there were some Heads of Houses, Professors, Lecturers, Officials, "Coaches," and others of classes not hitherto bound to celibacy who had wives, and, presumably, some of these had daughters; but their womankind was so little in evidence as to be practically non-existent. It was quite feasible for a man to live the whole life of Cambridge without becoming personally aware of the existence of any sex but his own—out, that is to say, of the May term: and then the merely temporary invaders represented all that the life of Cambridge was not, before the whole spirit of the place had been subjugated by academic Eve. As the opposite of a misogynist, I will take for granted that the new life is better than the old. But to those of us who lived the old purely masculine life, what is called "Cambridge" is not Cambridge, but a brand new University under a delusive sameness of name.

Every story must needs be new to somebody. So for the benefit of such somebodies I will recall one lady of my own time who was not a nobody, inasmuch as she was conspicuously handsome. She was the wife of the unromantically named

editor of Euclid, Potts: and he was, beyond any comparison, the very ugliest man I ever saw. "I can't understand," said he, "why we should be known as Beauty and the Beast. I have always considered Mrs. Potts to be distinctly good-looking." The story merits remembrance as an instance of that rarest of rarities—wit without a sting.

CHAPTER VIII

In Hall and Chambers—The Berryer banquet: Brougham and Cockburn—Gray's Inn—Rushton *v.* Campbell—An inefficient volunteer—Evenings in Mitre Court—"Atalanta in Calydon"—"Agag" Stott—*Fanatici per la musica*

HAVING secured an unshared first class in the Law Tripos, and consequent election to one of the three Law Studentships already mentioned among the legal specialities of Trinity Hall, I began life in London as one of the three or four pupils of Charles Pollock, a son of the then Lord Chief Baron, and himself afterwards a Baron of the Court over which his father had presided. The son used to complain of the difficulty of keeping up an acquaintance with a father who invariably rose before five in the morning, and, after a day of judicial duties, was in bed by nine. Those were the days of special pleading; and Charles Pollock's sound and solid practice necessarily included the science said to have required for its assimilation an insatiable appetite for sawdust sandwiches without butter. While lodging in the still untransformed Bloomsbury of earlier memories, and attending his chambers in Child's

Place, a long-demolished *cul de sac* adjoining Middle Temple Lane, I completed my course of dinners at Gray's Inn. There was as yet no compulsory examination of candidates for the Bar, a year's formal attendance at two courses of lectures—attendance by no means necessarily implying attention—being accepted as an alternative; and this, as the line of least resistance, I elected to follow. But the eating of so many dinners in Hall was, of course, as essential a preparation for the right to wear a two-tailed wig then as now. The procedure was only more reminiscent of a barbarous age; for the dinner hour was still five, and port was the only beverage throughout the meal. In all seriousness, however, the only excuse for a scoff at the notion of eating oneself into a profession is its tempting ease. Nothing is more important than the cultivation of a common professional atmosphere. And I suppose no true Englishman will deny that this is better achieved in the free and friendly friction of the dinner-table than is anywise possible in the lecture room or examination hall.

It seems rather a leap; but the mention of dinners in general leads to that of a very big one in particular, as belonging to my student period—the banquet given by the English Bar to the

great French advocate Berryer. Students as well as barristers were admitted among the hosts of the occasion : and my presence enables me to give the exact words of a seldom accurately quoted passage in the speech of Sir Alexander Cockburn. Lord Brougham had declared the whole duty of an advocate to be to his client only, without recognition of any other, public or private ; to fight with all his might for his client's victory, and for that alone, regardless of however injurious, however unjust, to the rights, interests, and reputations of others the consequences of the battle might be. I am not presenting his contention a whit too strongly ; for that matter, Brougham's view of the ethics of advocacy is pretty generally known. And the battle was to be conducted, he proclaimed, "*Per fas aut per nefas*"—by any means, fair or foul. "Yes," retorted Cockburn, who followed, "*Per fas sed non per nefas* ; with the sword of the soldier—not with the dagger of the assassin." I can hear the words now, in the very voice that sent them ringing down the hall. And I am glad to remember the applause with which they were acclaimed.

Gray's Inn was then a very small Society ; but it was thus the more sociable. Our resemblance to a family party, wherein everybody knows everybody, was certainly not the less complete

for a certain, or rather uncertain, propensity to quarrels. Why we quarrelled, or what about, I was never able to tell; and I am sure that my inability was generally shared, especially by the parties to the squabbles. Did the propensity come from drinking port through dinner, and frequently after dinner too? Or from our large proportion of Irish students in comparison with Lincoln's Inn or the two Temples? We were not behindhand even with these great Societies in the matter of our traditions. Was not Bacon of us—did he not habitually walk in the garden overlooked by his chambers? Did not Shakespeare—ominous conjunction of names!—produce "A Midsummer Night's Dream," its first performance, in our Hall? So we piously believed. Were not the tables at which we dined made from the timber of the Great Armada; and was not "The glorious memory of good Queen Bess," their donor and our constant benefactress, solemnly and ritually honoured as the only toast of grand day? Did not our roll of worthies comprise Chief Justice Gascoigne, Stephen Gardiner, Philip Sidney, Lord Burleigh, the three Archbishops, Whitgift, Laud, and Juxon, Chief Justice Holt, Samuel Romilly—whose name, by the way, was represented still, both among the benchers and the students. Among the Masters of the Bench

were the two future judges, Huddlestone and Manisty. The incisive voice of the former started talking with the "Amen" of the grace before meat, and sounded over the hall without a moment's cessation till he retired with his fellow-benchers into the Parliament Room, where, I doubt not, it started again. To get in a mouthful edgeways must have been a feat requiring no little skill.

Among the students of my time, none will fail to remember the almost painfully spare figure of William Lowes Rushton, the Shakespearean enthusiast who claimed to have anticipated Lord Campbell in demonstrating, from the internal evidence of the plays, that their author was a lawyer; Campbell being an unscrupulous plagiarist of Rushton. There was no suggestion of the Baconian heresy, which must have been in its early infancy, if yet born; William Shakespeare the dramatist and William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon were not yet suspected of conspiracy to perpetrate the silliest hoax on record. I think that Rushton was entitled to claim against Campbell priority of publication of their common argument, that only a lawyer could have employed legal technicalities, frequently abstruse and unlikely to occur to a layman, with the accurate familiarity dis-

played in the Shakespearean plays. Plagiarism, however, is another affair. It is quite on the cards that Campbell had never seen or heard of Rushton's articles on a probability likely to occur to any legal mind. As to the probability itself, a learned King's Counsel has gone far to demolish it by showing that while legal knowledge is conspicuous in the plays, equally conspicuous in them is legal ignorance. The whole question cannot matter much. The plays are still and always the plays, even if more than a single hand went to their making. And though it mattered supremely to Rushton, even to the point of rendering him a fanatic with a grievance, its importance to him arose from a sincere and whole-hearted enthusiasm for the plays themselves—a whole-hearted sincerity by no means normally characteristic of controversies concerning their author. He knew them by heart—meaning all that "by heart" can in its first and fullest sense imply.

Nor was his enthusiasm exclusive. It extended, by an obvious enough process, from Shakespeare to music, and, perhaps yet more obviously, to patriotic duty. Enthusiasm is not necessarily contagious, but it is none the less compulsive for that; and, one day, a casual meeting with Rushton in Lincoln's Inn ended in his carrying me off to be forthwith enlisted

in the corps popularly known as the Devil's Own. My reminiscences of that corps can be recorded very concisely indeed. I certainly attended, though with constantly lessening zeal, a very few drills for raw recruits on the terrace of Lincoln's Inn garden. The next step (to the goose's) was to find the whole business a bore, to be postponed to a next time that somehow never came. I never procured a uniform or handled a rifle; and the next proceeding was to forget that I was even so much as nominally bound to qualify myself for effective service to my Queen and Country. Nor was it till years later that I was disagreeably reminded of my forgotten duty by the receipt of an application for the payment of my subscriptions to the corps, by that time fallen into formidably and—as is invariably the way in such cases—inconveniently long arrear. I paid: and I resigned. I am certainly not going to make excuses for not having done what I had voluntarily undertaken to do. But I do think it would have been better for myself, morally as well as physically, if I had been obliged to make myself effective under some stringent system. And, not being an exceptional person in any way, I may safely take it that what would have been better for me would, in the same way, have been better

for some thousands more whose momentary flicker of military spirit was too faint to grow, without some fanning from without, into even the feeblest flame; and better, by those thousands, for their native land. I do not suppose that I should have made a notably efficient "territorial"; but, at the very least, we must all have attained to some minimum of efficiency in any such force had it existed for us—we, the absolutely inefficient volunteers.

Chief among the friends for whom I had to thank Gray's Inn was Ben Thomas Williams, a Welshman from the Welsh part of Pembrokeshire, in after years a Queen's Counsel and County Court Judge. One of my first dinners in hall during my first student's term was on the occasion of his call; I had then, though still a painfully shy schoolboy very much at sea among strange waters, somehow made his acquaintance. No doubt the "somehow" was his own kindly good nature. In him, on my return to Gray's Inn hall, I found a ready-made friend. But I must part from him for the present, for his full and proper place in my memory is in connection with later events—if such a word may be introduced into such uneventful remininiscences as these. Among Trinity Hall men in London I found my

former opposite neighbour Alsager Hay-Hill, who, together with a brother in the Audit Office, occupied a set of chambers in Mitre Court, adjoining the Temple. They were on the topmost floor of a very tall building, inspiring a visitor in wintry weather, at a moment when the fire happened to be low, to complain, in the words of Tennyson's Œnone, of

> Height and cold, the splendour of the Hills.

But the cold was but an accident of the minute, speedily remedied; and the irremediable height—I forget how many steps one had to climb—was no "object," as an advertiser would say, to the lungs and limbs of Hill's friends and acquaintance, who seemed as numerous in London as they had been in Cambridge. At any rate, whenever I made the ascent of a Friday evening, when he was always at home, his room was sure to be full of men, some *habitués*, some there for the first time; for next to an old friend he liked a new one. In fact those Friday evenings in Mitre Court became a social institution for the indulgence of talk at ease and at large.

Literature and Art were our principal topics; and there was much to be said of both in the first half of the 'sixties. Whistler, for instance, was a chronic bone of contention; and William

Cosmo Monkhouse, the afterwards eminent art critic, Hill's most intimate *habitué*, was one of the painter's vanguard—or forlorn hope, as many of us would call it then. Monkhouse—by way of parenthesis—was then chiefly known among his circle not as the critic by nature, but as a poet by industry, relieving his week-day labours at the Board of Trade by devoting his Sunday mornings to versification. The visible result was a little volume which did not bring him fame, but was as respectably "minor" as the pleasure of production could make it, and more than merely respectable here and there. I do not think he would take my criticism amiss now any more than he used to take it then. But the great event of those years was of a nature that, I venture to say, would be absolutely impossible now; nay, that I cannot hope to make a later generation even dimly comprehend. It was nothing less than an outburst of popular exultation, not over some sensational achievement in sport or finance, but over a new poem by one whose very name was unknown save to a small group of Oxford men. Who was this Swinburne, whose "Atalanta in Calydon" had, all of a sudden, without previous puff or prestige, taken the entire public by storm? The "Atalanta," and its author, were the topic of the day, and of

many days. I am pretty sure that if a new George Eliot were to publish a new "Adam Bede" her novel might, if ably engineered, be talked about for its nine days or so a little more than its weekly swarm of rivals; but throw a whole nation into excitement—No. Yet not even Sherlock Holmes got such a grip of the public mind in 1892 as Adam Bede in 1859. "Adam Bede," however, was, after all, a novel. But for a poem; a dramatic poem; a dramatic poem on a classical theme, and in classical form to boot, with an unknown name on its title-page, to win instantaneous fame—that is what is so utterly incomprehensible now, but was a fact then. I have seldom known the satisfaction of being one of a majority. But there was no possible minority even of a single voice, when one evening in 1864, still remembered as if it were yesterday, I, with my brother, who then shared my lodgings, and another *habitué* of Mitre Court, feasted together on "Atalanta in Calydon."

Of this third at our feast I intend to make mention at some length, not because I can expect his name to excite the slightest preliminary interest, but because these pages will be and remain the sole record of one who was extraordinarily interesting in himself, and should, and might, have left no inconsiderable mark upon his time.

And, as nobody knew him so intimately as I, it is the more pious a duty to attempt his rescue from perpetual but unmerited oblivion. I have previously expressed my belief that some fairy godmother must have bestowed upon Alfred Ainger a christening gift against which no hostile influences, from within or without, should ever be able to prevail; a charm needing for its working no effort of his own. On the like theory, George Stott, of whom I now speak, was assuredly a pre-eminently helpless victim of that more familiar malignant fairy whose gift, according to the legends of her race, neutralises all her sisters' favours. I never knew anything definite of his early life, except that it had been passed in Bristol, and that he had been received into the Catholic Church at the age of sixteen. That was a misfortune from every point of view; for it was clearly a case of those impulsive and immature conversions that are more likely than not to be followed by a reaction. Reaction did follow, and that strongly. By the time that I first saw his frail-looking figure, with the disproportionately large head, the sombre complexion, the Oriental cast of features, and the chest wholly covered by a magnificent black beard, I doubt if he retained a fragment of his temporary creed. At the same time he used to bewilder plain minds

by his contention that though he, George Stott, had outgrown faith, as logically untenable, the universal dominance of the Church of Rome was the imperative need of this hopelessly illogical world. He would, in mixed company, when the talk turned upon such matters, so champion Loyola and the counter-Reformation as to render himself liable, at the period of Newdegate and Whalley, to the suspicion of being a Jesuit in disguise. I think it rather pleased him to convey such an impression, for he thoroughly enjoyed mystifying those whom he regarded as Philistines. (Is that mid-Victorian term of contempt, imported from Germany, for persons on whom our own lofty intelligence looks down as stupidly and incurably narrow-minded, still in common use? It seems to have passed out of print long enough to have passed out of meaning.) But mystification is always a dangerous game, unless played with consummate tact—of which Stott had not a particle. For, with all his apparent complexity, he was really as simple, and, to those whom he failed to mystify, as transparently simple, as a child.

He had entered St. John's College, Cambridge: and had he remained there would probably have done well, for he was a good scholar. But his fastidious taste—or, shall I say, that malignant fairy?—impelled him to migrate to Magdalene;

him, a man with no means to spare, to what was at that time essentially a rich man's college; a man to whom a good degree was imperatively necessary from studious and economical St. John's to a small college no less distinguished—of course I am speaking of now ancient history—for the opposite qualities. And thereupon ensued another error. From out of all the classical "coaches" in Cambridge he selected Calverley. No doubt Charles Stuart Calverley, of Christ's, was the most brilliant of them all, as nobody can need to be told. It was not, however, a wit, a humorist, a man whose own brilliancy could take care of itself without trouble and presume a like ability in others, that his pupil required, but a tutor of the exacting sort, who would spare neither them nor himself in getting the best and utmost out of his men. A financial strain, inevitable under such conditions, brought him to seek literary or tutorial work in London without being able to wait for a degree. Some of his surviving Cambridge contemporaries, who would be somewhat older than mine, may perhaps recollect "Agag" Stott, so called because something about his gait on King's Parade seemed suggestive of the King of Amalek, who "came delicately." It is on record that Calverley once laid a wager that he would get fastidious and elaborately

attired Stott of Magdalene to promenade that same parade, on a given day, at its most frequented hour of the afternoon, carrying a cabbage. It seemed impossible that he should win; but the tidings of the bet had spread abroad, and at the given hour of the appointed day the Parade was thronged. Punctually to the time, "Agag" Stott picked his way through the throng, ostentatiously holding a cabbage in both hands. Calverley had hedged by betting Stott that he would *not* carry a cabbage along King's Parade.

When I knew him he was reviewing fiction for the *Echo*, under the editorship of Arthur Arnold, and more general literature for the *Economist* under that of Walter Bagehot; and on the establishment of the *Graphic* he was engaged in the former capacity there. Between the first and last of these services he was appointed editor of the *Allahabad Pioneer*, but was back in London within a little more than a year. There again I think I see the malignant fairy's hand, for he was not merely no man of business; he was incapable of realising that a newspaper has to concern itself with other matters than literature and philosophy, and that even these have their indispensable business side. But though not intended by Nature either for

an editor or for any other position demanding energetic and decisive action, a more able or trustworthy reviewer there could not be. No doubt he had more time, in our more leisurely days, than he could have found in these for ensuring to every book that came to him the justice of a thorough reading, with a thorough thinking over to follow ; but, as myself a reviewer both of those days and of these, I may have more to say on this subject before I have done. Nor was his thinking confined to his current work. Thought was his business, precisely as it had been Hobbes of Malmesbury's. The comparison never occurred to me till this moment ; but it is peculiarly apt, in so far at least as both were mainly occupied with the same class of questions, and were entirely alike in the logical severity of their conclusions. And here I come to the sadness of the whole matter—that one whose thought was at once so subtle and so sincere, so well based on wide reading and yet so independent of its base, should have left behind him—Nothing. He had a notion of some day writing a history of his opinions—it must have been interesting, as the story of the making of a mind, and otherwise of critical and perhaps philosophic value. But it was never begun, and, I am quite sure, never would have

been begun even had he been alive to-day. He, as it were, evaporated in talk, seldom eloquent, but always lucid, vigorous, and overflowing with fresh suggestion. And it was really talk, not monologue, for he rejoiced in a well-fought battle: well-fought-out too, for a talk that had begun, say, with dinner at the Cock (the historic and Tennysonian Cock: not its modernised continuation over the way) or the Solferino in Soho, might continue till past sunrise, and then be not ended but adjourned.

Our arguments were by no means always of a serious order, however seriously conducted. They were often of the nature of the "Quodlibets"; the questions with which the disciples of the Schoolmen used to amuse their ingenuity. If we never tackled the celebrated, if supposititious, example of what such a thing might be, "How many angels can dance upon the point of a needle?" it was certainly not because of its being outside the range of our speculations. Poetry, too, came in for a great deal of talk, and Browning, in especial, had no more thorough devotees. Music, however, ran all else very hard indeed. We were not the least in advance of our times. While we believed whole-heartedly in the eternal supremacy of Beethoven, whom we held to be Music's utmost and final utterance,

we had a truly mid-Victorian passion for the Opera of our mid-Victorian time. Scarcely a week passed, during the season—then a regular period, from Easter till when the grouse summoned Parliament to rise—that did not, once at least, find us patiently suffocating in the abominable atmosphere that led to the gallery of one or the other of the two houses, and thinking it well worth while. Well—it *was* worth while, since we found it so. Being neither musician nor musical critic, I am not qualified to compare the present state of things with what prevailed previously to the great Wagnerian revolution, then only just beginning to cast its shadow—or should I say its light?—before. But I cannot imagine that the most passionate music-lover of the most intellectually advanced school could, in the way of sincere enjoyment, surpass us who knew nothing better than an opera of Mozart, or Donizetti, or Rossini, or Bellini, or Gounod, or Verdi, conducted by Costa or Arditi, and rendered by such singers—to name a representative few—as Titiens, Lucca, Rudersdorff, Trebelli; Giuglini, Graziani, Faure. It was the music and its performance, and nothing else, that had got into our heads when once, after hearing Titiens as Fidelio, we walked on and on, and talked on and on, without note of distance,

direction, or time, till seven o'clock the next morning suddenly brought us to our senses in an unknown and rainy region that we found to be Blackwall. Of the singers who had been the favourites of an earlier time, Alboni, Grisi, and Mario still survived. But Mario was in the second stage of what had been said of him—that "while he could sing he couldn't act, and when he could act he couldn't sing." I am certain that on one occasion—I think it was in "Le Prophète"—he merely went through the form of opening his mouth, moving his lips, and extending his arms, without emitting a sound: yet the applause of the ever-faithful British audience could scarcely have been greater even in his best days. One does not always need corporeal ears in order to hear. My only recollection of Grisi is a sad one. She had been ill-advised enough to attempt a return to the stage which she had quitted for many years: and I was ill-advised enough to hear her. It was in "Lucrezia Borgia." Not a trace of what had given her fame remained: and it was pitiable when, in the last act, her corpulence prevented her from rising from her knees without far too obvious aid. And the audience was not so faithfully kind to her Lucrezia as it had been to Mario's John of Leyden.

CHAPTER IX

The Oxford Circuit—Walter John Huddleston—J. J. Powell — Henry Matthews — Dr. Kenealy — Quarter Sessions

CALLED to the Bar in due course, I became an inmate of chambers in Pump Court, Temple, shared by the present Sir Arthur Collins, late Chief Justice of Madras, and my friend B. T. Williams, already mentioned in connection with Gray's Inn, to which Collins, already a leading junior on the Western Circuit, also belonged. I joined the Oxford Circuit, of which Gloucester, next to Stafford, is the principal Assize town.

The leading wearers of silk at that time were, *facile princeps*, Huddleston, afterwards Baron Huddleston, and J. J. Powell. The Junior Bar was exceedingly strong, for it included Henry James, afterwards Lord James of Hereford; Henry Matthews, afterwards Viscount Llandaff, and sometime Home Secretary; J. O. Griffits, whom I mention here not for the high place he held in the esteem and confidence of solicitors as a sound and able lawyer, but for his singular

habit of wearing full evening dress, apparently always brand-new, everywhere and at every hour of every day; Macnamara, also a favourite Counsel of the sound and solid order; Montagu Williams, who might fairly be called the Prisoners' Attorney-General, so extensively, and so successfully, was he employed in their defence at the Old Bailey and elsewhere. No doubt his subsequent success as a police magistrate was largely founded on his speciality at the Bar. He was no mere lawyer—I doubt if Macnamara or Griffits would have allowed him to be a "lawyer" at all; but I am unable to follow him into the theatrical world where he was the most thoroughly at home. It was curious to compare his position in the criminal courts with the face, figure, and even manner of just a good-natured and good-tempered boy. Among my slightly senior contemporaries was Mr. Justice Jelf: Mr. Justice Darling and Lord Loreburn did not become members of the Circuit till too late for any memory of mine.

Every Circuit has, as most people know, a social as well as a professional side: and our Bar Mess had in Huddleston an almost ideal Senior. His loquacity, already noted, and his open vanities—he liked to know dukes, and to have it known that he knew them, and after his

promotion to the Bench married a duke's daughter—might excite a smile. But it would be a kindly smile, in sympathy with a kindly nature. I thoroughly believe that he not only wished but tried to make everybody round him happy and comfortable. Some of us, between Court and Mess, were walking with him a little out of Stafford when we passed another of us walking alone, "unfriended, melancholy, slow." It was a very recently elected member of the Mess, without any ready-made acquaintance, and too evidently uncouth and shy to be likely to make his own way. "How is it that —— is all by himself?" asked Huddleston, to whom solitude, as implying silence, would appeal as a dire calamity. "Hasn't he any friends among us? No? Then we must give him some." And I am not more sure that I am writing these words than that he took the first opportunity of saying something kindly to —— in a markedly familiar way, for others to see and hear.

Powell, his opponent in ordinary, was also his opposite in nearly all ways save in kindliness of nature. And in that respect there was a difference. Huddleston certainly liked to be liked for his kindliness; Powell, I should say, was wholly unconscious of any such desire. I am only noting an obvious difference—not in any

way giving the preference to instinctive over deliberate kindliness, or *vice versa*. He was entirely without affectation. He was of a humble origin which he never either flaunted after the manner of some self-made men, or concealed after that of others: and it was understood, to his honour, that when in Gloucester at Assize time he never neglected the kinsfolk above whose heads he had climbed. As an advocate, he was apt to suffer from loss of temper—a fault from which Huddleston was wholly free; but it was the natural defect of his zeal for his cause. That he spared no pains, and left as little to chance as chance ever allows to be left, whether in war or in law, I once had uncomfortable experience. We lodged in the same house on the College Green, and our bedrooms adjoined. He was next day to appear for the Crown in a trial for murder; and he spent the whole night in rehearsing his opening speech to the jury with such rhetorical energy that he robbed me of my night's rest as well as himself of his own. It was an odd sensation to hear repeated in Court next morning, verbally and literally, the final revision of the speech from which I was still suffering. Huddleston, however, who defended, gave me my revenge.

If I were bidden to name the ablest man I ever

met, I should not hesitate to fix upon Henry Matthews, who, as Viscount Llandaff, passed away a few months ago in his eighty-eighth year. And in that choice for a first place I should be far from alone. But if I were bidden to name the ablest man I ever *knew*, I should hesitate much and long: for I strongly doubt if he was really known by anybody at all. Below all his geniality there was something—I know not what—that seemed to refuse intimacy; and in the perception of that something, whatever it was, I am, again, far from alone. It was like a perpetual "Thus far thou shalt come, but no farther." That he was unsurpassed as a fully equipped and accomplished lawyer few will question; and his equipment was not confined to English law. As an achievement in advocacy, his reply for the petitioner in the Crawford case was, according to all accounts and reports, a masterpiece of victorious invective. But he was not conspicuously successful on Circuit for getting verdicts from common juries. His subtleties of argument were apt to fly over their heads; he made no appeal to their feelings, like James; he lacked the personal impressiveness of Huddleston; and so far from sharing the red-hot zeal of Powell, his manner suggested an indifference to the result, as if his interest in his client was limited to pre-

senting the client's case in a flawlessly logical way. "Matthews addresses a jury as if he were asking it for a dance," was a comment I once heard. And the comment was not inapt, though it may seem hazy here. But one does not disparage a racehorse because . . . Well, I have too much respect for the common jury, and too much admiration for the special ability of those who do know how to influence it, to continue the comparison to its customary end.

I suppose I must not forget Dr. Kenealy, as in some request when a slashing speech rather than prudent strategy or scrupulous fairness was what a case required. It is difficult, if possible, to deprive one's mind of the light of after events in an attempt to revive previous impressions; but I do not think that his conduct of the Tichborne case came upon those who knew him as much of a surprise. I am now disposed to describe him as genius gone wrong; partly perhaps through too thorough an acceptance of Lord Brougham's conception of the whole duty of an advocate—to win his client's cause *per fas aut per nefas*: by fair means if he could, but if these were not available, then by foul. Brougham, one may hopefully assume, did not carry out his doctrine to the whole of its practical conclusion. Indeed he has been charged with the inconsistency of

thinking less of a client's interests than of his own glory: notably in *his* conduct of a *cause célèbre*, the trial of Queen Caroline. And that, in this world of mixed motives, might well have been the case with Kenealy, specially when helped by some twist of the brain. Does the reader chance to have ever come across that piece of wild work, his "New Pantomime"? If so, no further explanation of "genius gone wrong" will be required. He was, moreover, not only a fine classical scholar, but a master of the principal modern and Oriental languages. I am not, however, suggesting that much learning had made him mad: the mental twist would have been earlier than the learning. I think he must have become a half-convinced monomaniac towards the close of his career, deliberately employing the unconvinced part of his own brain in bewildering the brains of others. One is ashamed to remember the national nightmare known as the Tichborne claim, turning old and intimate friends into enemies, dividing families, populating lunatic asylums, and outraging common sense at every point and turn. I was once at a large mixed dinner party where a clergyman actually propounded this amazing thesis: The evidence in favour of the claimant to the Tichborne estates is stronger than the evidences of Christianity. But

Christianity is true : therefore all the more is the identity of the claimant with Roger Tichborne true. It was certainly not without cause that I spoke of Kenealy as bewildering other brains than his own. Of course it may be suggested that this particular parson cannot have had any brains to bewilder. But the suggestion would be wrong.

At the City (of Gloucester) and County Quarter Sessions, both of which I regularly attended, the ordinary leaders were Pickwickianly named Robert Sawyer, a good fellow who, in mid-career, inspired by all a convert's zeal, threw up a sound and steady practice at the Bar in order that he might devote himself to the teetotal cause ; and George Griffiths, a successful defender of prisoners, who possessed the invaluable art of talking to twelve Gloucestershire jurors as if he were just one of themselves—accent and all. When he became totally blind, he still stuck to his practice at Assizes and Sessions, mastering his briefs by having them read to him—a feat which must be well-nigh unique in professional annals. He was not notorious for polish, and was certainly no respecter of persons : he would address the future Lord James of Hereford as "Jim" ; and I have heard him invite Huddleston himself, the associate of dukes and duchesses, to

drop in for a Sunday's pot-luck with him and the missis whenever in London and so disposed. *A propos* of both pot-luck and teetotalism together—it was customary for the Bar to dine with the Magistrates one evening during the County Sessions. One of the latter prided himself on his skill as a brewer of punch; and on one of these occasions, at any rate, he displayed it by substituting ale for water. Not a drop of the feebler fluid would he allow. The result was much admired—at the time. That no wig covered a headache in Court next morning I dare not surmise.

CHAPTER X

"The Just Judge"—The *Law Magazine*—Miss Cobb—Andrew Johnson's oath—My first story—John Blackwood—The value of a name

My fee-book, still extant after nearly half a century of chance and change, tells me that at no time during my active connection with the Bar could I describe myself as briefless; that my fees during my first year amounted to seventy-one pounds and eight shillings, and during my second to ten guineas better. But then happened what—in itself a sorrow—gradually and indirectly, though not slowly, diverted my course of life into directions of which I had never dreamed.

I have not yet given my father a prominent or frequent place in these memories. But I must recall him now, and with affectionate pride. I long ago mentioned him as among the first-appointed County Court Judges. His Circuit was extensive, comprising the three important towns of Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Stroud, eight other Courts in the same county, and one

in Wiltshire, thus involving a considerable amount of journey by road as well as rail. The twenty miles from Cheltenham to Stow-on-the-Wold, for instance, high up on the table-land of the Cotswolds (said to be the highest market town in England), had to be travelled by road; and, until antiquated notions of time and distance were, in company with other things, smashed up by the motor-car, twenty miles were twenty miles. I used to think them more, crawling, as most of them did, through a scarcely inhabited expanse, monotonously grass-green or snow-white according to the season, and diversified only by stone walls, with an occasional belt of Scotch firs planted here and there to break the sweep of the wind. During his nineteen years of judicial office I do not think that my father once, unless by reason of some unavoidable accident, kept a Court waiting: absence through illness I do not remember at all. Nor during all those same nineteen years of dealing with an annually increasing variety of cases was there an appeal to the Superior Courts from any decision of his, save once; and then the appeal was dismissed and the decision confirmed. Confidence in the soundness of his law was unbounded, and was amply justified by the scrupulous care with which his judgments were formed. In questions of fact his anxiety for

justice was literally proverbial, for it caused him to be popularly known as "The Just Judge"; and a nobler title than that is not to be conceived. My brother and I frequently accompanied him on his journeys; and I sometimes grew impatient with the way in which he would hear out what appeared to me a transparently clear case to the last word that either party could find to say, or extricate the most trivial-seeming dispute from the most hopeless-seeming tangle. He was never in a hurry, never lost his temper, even with the most irritating witness, thought highly of the judicial office, and unaffectedly maintained its dignity. Speaking of the County Court Judges generally, Chief Justice Erle, I have been told, pronounced the opinion that "some of them ought to be sent up among us," the Judges of the Superior Courts—"Francillon for instance."

In the summer of 1866, he, my mother, my brother, my sister, and myself were making a vacation tour together when he succumbed to an attack of cholera at Ouchy, and was buried at Lausanne. The cloisters of Gloucester Cathedral contain a window, the tribute of the officials of his Courts to his memory. I shall not dwell upon the nature of our journey home. That can be imagined by any reader as readily as it can be recalled by me. I will leave blank the

few months that elapsed before my mother and sister joined me in lodgings in London.

The last ten words are one consequence of a serious curtailment of our united means; for those of my mother and sister were no more than they needed, and I had none whatever beyond what I might earn. It is true that my fee-book to date was not altogether discouraging. But the expenses of two or three Circuits and eight distant Quarter Sessions every year, the necessary share of chambers and a clerk in London, plus all the hundred-and-one minor expenses—not minor in the aggregate—that practice at the Common Law Bar demands, rendered it exceedingly unlikely that income could balance expenditure for many years to come. It did not occur to me to throw the Bar over and seek my fortune elsehow and elsewhere. I had been trained for the Bar almost from my cradle; I was my father's son; all the ambition I ever had was bounded by, all my associations had for years been bound up with, the Bar. I am wrong, though. I did make one effort to change my spots by applying for an Inspectorship of Schools. I am fairly confident that I should not have made a bad Inspector, and had a sufficiently good academic record; but no doubt there were many with a

better, as well as a more influential connection with the official world. At any rate my other attempts to make Fortune my friend were, while more consistent with the way to the Woolsack, no less immediately barren. The *Law Magazine* was then in a parenthetic state between its past and its present successes. Its proprietor, a member of the Oxford Circuit, carried it on less for profit than for the sake of what is called Social Science; Lord Brougham's National Association for the Promotion of Social Science was still well alive and prominently in view, and among its most active and eminent organisers was the proprietor of the *Law Magazine*. The editorship falling vacant, I stepped into it on the exceedingly speculative terms that my remuneration was to consist of the whole of the annual profits, if any: of nothing, if none. I must have been extravagantly sanguine to enter, without the slightest editorial experience, into a bargain of which the very terms were based upon the unlikelihood of turning stagnation into healthy circulation within a year. I do not think that my proprietor had much reason to complain when, at the end of twelve months, he had incurred through my editorship the loss of something between two shillings and half-a-crown.

In fact he did not complain. He saw quite

clearly that, while he had no objection to losing half-a-crown a year for Social Science's sake, I could not afford, even in such a cause, to work without a living wage. The work, however, besides being useful as experience, had not been without interest of the non-financial kind. There were my contributors, who also worked for nothing, but with a good will, and in the sincere belief that his or her article in the *Law Magazine* would have weight with the world. An editor can exercise but an imperfect authority over unpaid contributors, but I got on very well on the whole with mine. I do not think that Miss Cobb was among them, but it was in this connection that I occasionally met her, remembering her not acccording to her merits as a social reformer or to her distinction as a journalist, but only a comely and more than plump lady with a more than plump little spaniel in whose ways and welfare she seemed to take a warmly affectionate concern. I am sure that she made one creature as happy as she desired to make all. Dudley Field, the American lawyer and orator, was, when in England, another member of the same circle. There was a scandalous belief current that Andrew Johnson, at that time President of the United States in succession to Lincoln, was an habitual drunkard, and had even taken his

Presidential oath in a state of intoxication. The latter charge Field, who had been present and knew him well, told me was obviously and painfully true. But why? Just because he was one of the most abstemious of men. The excitement of the occasion had sent into his inexperienced head the unaccustomed priming of a glass of champagne. Field's was first-rate evidence, and I record it in case any future historian should repeat the charge.

My next search for a professional back-door was no less futile. B. T. Williams introduced me to William Henry Michael, of his Circuit, who had undertaken a new and up-to-date edition of Jacob's Law Dictionary, and required a "devil." A "devil," as just possibly some lay reader may not know, is the forensic term for one who does, or helps to do, another man's work, with or without a share in the pay. Michael's career had been singularly out of the common. He must have been more than fifty years old when he threw up a large and lucrative medical practice at Swansea, got himself called, and stepped at once into a larger and more lucrative practice at the Parliamentary Bar. For six months I plodded at Jacob, and had mastered the whole law and doctrine of Accord and Satisfaction, when the undertaking came to an end. Michael found he

had no time and attention to spare—indeed, I always wondered that a man with such an amount of profitable business on his hands from the very first should ever have given a single thought to Jacob.

Here I think I hear an impatient reader ask, "But why not take to coaching, or journalism, or reporting, or other of the methods by which many afterwards successful barristers have enabled themselves to tide over their lean or even wholly barren years?" Well—after two such years I *did* take to something of the kind. It was George Stott, himself coaching and journalising, who suggested that I might utilise the magazines. I thought not. My only contributions to literature (if literature they could be called) up to the end of 1867 had been a couple of short poems (I call them such by courtesy) in *Once a Week*, and a couple of articles and a number of book notices under my own editorship in the *Law Magazine*. But, in deference to my friend's arguments, having nothing better to do, and seeing nothing before me but penniless failure, I thought there could be no harm in courting a failure the more. The experiment by which I expected, almost intended, to convict my adviser of error, took the form of a story. I had never tried to write a story in my life before, and cannot tell what

induced me to do so then. Nor can I recall any such excitement over it, any such artistic glow, as is usually recorded in such cases. It was written in quite cold and common ink, and sent to *Blackwood* in cold, nay, frozen, certainty of its return. I knew nothing more of "Maga" than everybody knew, and chose it for my experiment because that little was more than I knew of any other. When it came back upon my hands I intended sending it the whole round till it should have been rejected everywhere. The process would not cost much, and nobody would be able to say that I had not tried. But it did not come back. Instead of my manuscript promptly came a letter from John Blackwood himself, speaking of "Grace Owen's Engagement" in such complimentary terms that I had to read them many times in order to make sure that they were applied by a great editor to a story of mine, and—it was then April or May, 1868—fixing its appearance in two numbers for the July and August following. "Grace Owen" paid me sixty pounds on her first appearance, and twenty more when her story was reprinted in "Tales from Blackwood"; so that my first short story brought me in almost exactly as much as my best year at the Bar, and without any absorption by Circuit expenses, chamber rent,

and so forth—with none but of a few pence by ink, paper, and pens. No wonder that I wrote a second without delay; and this, in three parts, brought in, only a few months later, a further ninety pounds. During the next year I contributed to "Maga" a serial story in six numbers, presumably (I had not begun account-keeping) at the same rate of pay; in the next, another story in two numbers, and my first full novel, "Earl's Dene," published in the three-volume fashion of the time, in 1871.

Under these circumstances I fear that my estimate of John Blackwood may be suspected of personal colour. For this I should be sorry indeed. Not that I should fear such suspicion on the part of any who knew him, for their estimate would unanimously coincide with mine. During those first three years of my connection with "Maga" I came to know him well, and the better I knew him the higher my estimate of him rose. He represented the traditions of a great House with a greatness of his own. One of the finest of literary critics, he was also the most independent, never letting his judgment of a work be influenced by its author's prestige, however high. He had, too, the courage of his judgments, thinking less of what the reading public was likely to like than of what he con-

sidered it ought to like, and acting accordingly; a perilous principle for a business man without the critical faculty and foresight, but with him, having both, almost infallible. No doubt the anonymity sacredly observed in "Maga" under his rule tended to render its readers to an appreciable extent his accomplices in this matter. It compelled judgment of its contents upon their merits, unprejudiced by their writers' names. The power of a popular name over the popular mind was once made the subject of a deliberate experiment. Anthony Trollope, at the height of his vogue, wrote a novel entitled "Linda Tressel," which Blackwood published anonymously. It fell as flat as—a pancake (I cannot think of a more original comparison); whereas, had it issued with the name of Anthony Trollope on the title-page, there can be no question of what the result at that time would have been, even had its merits—not conspicuously great—been less than they were.

I was his guest at Strathtyrum, his house at St. Andrews, one summer, and came to the conclusion that next to golf, if next, his principal pleasure was the discovery of a writer who showed promise of any sort that seemed worth cultivation. He was unsparing of critical counsel in such cases; and did not cease to bestow it

even when an author had "arrived." His correspondence must have been enormous; how he managed to deal with it, always under his own hand, and at the same time with the mass of manuscripts that never failed to receive full and prompt attention no less at Strathtyrum than in George Street, and yet had ample leisure from breakfast to bed-time for golf, for conversation, and for the entertainment of his guests, was a mystery, until I learned how he spent the very late night and the very early morning. He spent them, I fear, only too arduously, for he was not quite sixty-one when he died in 1879. I have just been looking through the press notices of him collected for private circulation by the late William Blackwood, his nephew and successor. In the course of my own notice, reprinted from the *Globe*, I find myself speaking of him as "the very type of justice and generosity," and as a man of a remarkable personality who "may be regarded as almost, if not quite, the last and by no means the least worthy among the publishers of an old school who were much more than men of business, and reached the height of success by breadth of view, and by a principle of belief that in the world of books authors are fully as important as buyers."

I would willingly quote myself further; but I

have said enough to show how my friendship with John Blackwood stands out prominently among the best of my memories, and why there is none that I prize more.

CHAPTER XI

France after Sedan—Tracking a King—A suspected spy—At Meaux—At Lagny—Cool head and light heart—At Versailles

BLACKWOOD'S judgment of every work submitted to him solely upon its own merits, independently of authorship, friendship, or any other consideration, had been pre-eminently illustrated by his historic refusal of George Eliot's "Romola"; and I think that the warmest admirers of her previous work would now accept his apparently unbusiness-like decision as, from the purely literary standpoint, right and wise. I had therefore no cause to complain of my first experience of rejection in such a quarter and in such good company. Among the victims to Blackwood's critical impartiality was my "Pearl and Emerald," which, however, at once found a comfortable home in the *Cornhill*, and was afterwards published by Smith & Elder in a single volume with Du Maurier's illustrations.

I never gave up the Bar; nor can I say that

the Bar gave up me. It was not a case of divorce, or even of settled separation; but as my new occupation came to take up more and more of my thoughts and my time, so did my profession come to occupy them less and less. I cannot say definitely when my description as a practising barrister became a legal fiction, for there was in fact no such definite time. I cannot remember any attendance at Assizes or Sessions after the beginning of 1871, though that may not have been actually the last; but I do remember the January Sessions of that year, because of much Franco-Prussian war-talk in the robing-room; and I had recently seen something of what Invasion means.

That experience happened in this wise. In the course of September 1870, the London representative of the *New York World* was rendered anxious by the sudden cessation of letters or other messages from its correspondent at the German Head Quarters, and was in a hurry for an emissary who would look up the missing man, and act as his substitute meanwhile. I suppose there was not a war correspondent of competent experience then to be found in all London; every man of them was already employed. He had to put up, in short, with anybody who might be ready and willing

to start at once on so vague a mission, and therefore with my inexperienced self for want of a better. A common acquaintance, a journalist, whom he had asked to help him find what he wanted, and who had failed in other quarters, brought us together; and in no longer time than was needful for getting my passport and otherwise putting myself *en règle*, I was on my way to Ostend in the sudden capacity of representative of a great newspaper at the seat of a great war, but without any plan beyond reaching the German Head Quarters without delay.

That was easier to undertake than to do. Where was the King of Prussia (not yet German Emperor) likely to be found? Belgium could not tell, nor could the neighbouring North of France—though for the latter "could" one ought perhaps to read "would," seeing that a foreigner in haste to reach the German lines could not fairly count upon Frenchmen to speed him on his way. At last I made up my mind to make for Meaux, and managed, in spite of confused and broken communications, to reach Senlis. Thence to Meaux had to be by way of Dammartin. I reached that place also, and found it so completely occupied by the Prussians that, literally, not a French inhabitant was visible, man, woman, or child. But for the foreign

soldiery it was an absolutely deserted town. Referred to the Commandant for leave to proceed, I was quite courteously but, in spite of my credentials and explanations, quite firmly ordered to go back again. Nor, of course, did I have from him any hint of where or how to find the King. There was absolutely no thoroughfare; so there was nothing for it but to return to Senlis, where I was presently accosted by two official-looking persons, who required me to give an account of myself before—was it *Monsieur le Maire*? I have forgotten the title of the functionary in question, but *Monsieur le Maire* will serve.

There was considerable awkwardness in the situation. A spy had short shrift; and suspicion, if it once spread beyond official control, was practically identical with summary conviction. I could not but realise that a certain amount of suspicion was not without good ground. *Monsieur le Maire*, assisted in his investigation, as it seemed to me, by a court composed of any citizens who had any advice to volunteer, was quite aware of my visit to Dammartin. Either I had been under surveillance, as an unplaceable stranger, or the man who had driven me there had informed the authorities of my expedition, and of my private interview with the Prussian

Commandant besides. Senlis is not far from Dammartin, and a knowledge of the resources of a town of the importance of every town in the eyes of every good townsman might be of signal service to an advancing foe. My explanation, I fear, went but lamely. I am not fluent in any language—not even in my own—and my French, over and above its stumbling uncouthness, is, even to my own ear, infected with a noticeable German twang, presumably caught from my Alsatian and Thuringian teachers. My credentials consisted of a Foreign Office passport in the ordinary form, and a certificate, signed "L. Israels, Chief of World Staff of Correspondents," to the effect that I was one of the latter. That by "the World" was meant, not this "great globe itself—yea, all which it inherit," but only a New York newspaper, did not prove easy to make clear, even with the help of the attempted explanation that the Press of America in general, and of New York in particular, is a recognised Power, and that the *Grande Nation* had no more sympathetic well-wisher than the *New York World*. My arguments fell flat. I saw for myself that even if I were a credible witness on my own behalf, the sympathy of a newspaper could be but of little moment when the Prussians were within a few

hours of Senlis; and was I a credible witness, professing myself a British subject with one breath and an American journalist with another? The tribunal could not reasonably be expected to trust my own translation of the documents that I laid before it, and these were written in a tongue that might be English, as I asserted, but might be any other—French excepted. I felt that things were going badly for me, when a brilliant thought struck *Monsieur le Maire*. It seems that there was a reputed English scholar in Senlis; a messenger was sent for him, and, after a little delay, a good-looking young fellow appeared who, after a promiscuous consultation, took charge of the inquiry. Like my credentials, his first question might have been English; but certainly not "English as she is spoke" in its native land. Presumably, however, he asked for my story, which I accordingly repeated in the simplest English that I could contrive, he looking gravely from me to my credentials and back again meanwhile. I do not believe that he understood an appreciable fraction of what I said. But no doubt his repute as a linguist was at stake—on no other ground, at any rate, can I account for my discharge under circumstances that would have quite reasonably warranted my detention at least, if nothing

more decisive. Espionage was in the air; and when that happens, one knows what is apt to happen besides. My dismissal was accompanied, not with any apology, but with a strong recommendation to quit Senlis without any avoidable delay.

Perhaps it was the knowledge of this authoritative counsel, combined with an argument of my own that is seldom if ever known to fail, that induced the innkeeper with whom I had lodged the night before to forward me to Meaux by a roundabout route so as to avoid Dammartin. Indeed, so expeditiously was this arranged, and such the civility that surrounded me at Senlis between my arrest and my departure, as to suggest that my double anxiety to reach Meaux without the knowledge of the Prussian Commandant at Dammartin, while it did not whitewash me from the suspicion of espionage—nothing ever does that when it has once started—might argue that it was on the French instead of the Prussian side. Had such a possibility been hinted by the English scholar whose report had such an evident bearing on my discharge?

I reached Meaux, by help of a network of forest roads, without interruption, and found no difficulty in obtaining from the Staff Commandant there the necessary *sauf-conduit*. There, too,

I learned what, if I had only been lucky enough to have left London a very little earlier, would have given me a fine topic for a first news-letter—the Crown Prince's occupation of Versailles. As things were, that historic event had become stale during my efforts to reach Meaux through a newsless land, though, since my first arrival at Senlis, Versailles had never been more than a crow's flight of forty miles away. It was much as if, during an invasion of Britain, one should travel round London from Ware to Maidstone in blank ignorance that Windsor had been occupied by the invader before one's own journey had begun. I do not think anything so much impressed me with the reality of invasion as the conversion of the Cathedral into a hospital for foreign soldiers and native prisoners of war. There was plenty of Red Cross work at Meaux. And one felt the grip—one could not but feel it—of the German hand upon the whole place, as afterwards one felt it wherever the hand had fallen. It is not a cruel hand—nay, it is by nature a kindly one. But it is a merciless hand when mercy stands in the way. My impression of the invading army was as of some dispassionate force, never going out of its way to be cruel, never going out of its way to spare.

I would willingly have lingered at Meaux for

the sake of the novelty of its atmosphere ; but I was King-hunting, so my paramount duty was to track my quarry down, and to make up so far as might be for all vexatious delays. King William had left Meaux, and was now at the Rothschild *château* of Ferrières, near Lagny. So to Lagny I proceeded, and there emerged from utter isolation by a casual encounter with one Daniel, a Virginian, acting at Head Quarters for another New York paper. It was a great relief, for among all the legion of war-correspondents I had not, so far as I knew, a single acquaintance, was entirely without introductions, and, having come out so late, was new to my business among a swarm of proficient rivals. I mention the matter, however, on account of a certain puzzling incident. One evening we sat down, in a state of thorough sobriety—that point is of importance—to write our respective newsletters, each aided by nothing more intoxicating or narcotising than a single bottle of light beer, which I had procured from a *cabaret* close by. I had written about half my letter and consumed about half my beer when all my faculties became literally paralysed by a heavy drowsiness against which I could not even try to contend. All I further remember is a very late next morning of violent headache after more than ten hours of

lethargy, and finding Daniel suffering even more acutely from precisely the same attack, with precisely the same symptoms as mine. There lay both our unfinished letters, and there stood our equally unfinished beer. Did that *cabaret* keep a special brew for Prussians? And had I been taken for one, as at any rate not a Frenchman—especially if I am right in thinking that my French accent has a German flavour?

There was not much to be learned from a daily tramp or drive to Ferrières. King William with Bismarck beside him and Moltke opposite was a familiar object; but he never once stopped his carriage in order to impart exclusive information to the *New York World*. All the use I could make of my temporary position on that organ was to introduce myself to "Billy" Russell, who, as everybody knows, *was* the recipient and distributor of the confidences of Head Quarters —that is to say, just so much of them, and just so far, as Head Quarters might deem politic to please. The once intractably independent hero of the Crimea received me with all the courtesy due to the journal I represented, but of course had to let me know that, while there was no harm in asking for better opportunities of service, granting them, or getting them granted, was out of his power. In fact, I did not expect anything,

and so was scarcely disappointed. But I was naturally interested by an interview, though but short and barren, with Russell of *The Times*.

So little was to be got by hanging about Ferrières, Head Quarters though they were, that Daniel and I decided to transfer our own quarters from Lagny to Versailles, as the military capital during the siege. I think it was during that journey—for we had made some episodic excursions meanwhile—that we sighted the Stars and Stripes displayed from the roof of a château. The sole inhabitant proved, on a visit, to be a young ultra-gallicised American, one or two members of whose family had been conspicuously to the fore at the Court, and especially at the Court-balls, of Napoleon III. He now sat in the wreck of what had evidently been a highly and expensively decorated drawing-room ; for, as he told us, Prussian soldiers had recently been quartered there, and, though not at all bad fellows, had, through racial gaucherie, ignorance, and indifference to the furniture as well as to the feelings of others, done a good deal of smashing. They certainly had ; the proverbial bull in the china shop could not have done more. Our host could not even offer us chairs. But the Prussians had left the grand piano fairly sound ; so while we sat upon something, he sat upon something

else and entertained us with Offenbachian airs. It was like listening to a ghost of the times before Sedan. There is a conventional tradition that the Americans are an eminently cool-headed and the French an eminently light-hearted people. The general truth of the tradition by no means bears the test of observation. But at any rate never could cool head and light heart have been more closely united than in that young fellow, American by birth, French by adoption.

It was my fate to be in Versailles during the least eventful period of the siege, roughly speaking between the sortie of General Vinoy and the beginning of the bombardment, while negotiations were still pending. Of what was going on in Paris of course we knew nothing; in greater France little beyond the rumours of the restaurants—which, by the way, must indeed have had a quite abnormal experience of the good blown by an ill wind, so constantly were they thronged and so plentifully supplied. Our occupation mainly consisted in trying to get hints and inklings of where might be the likeliest chance of seeing something during the day, or rather the unlikeliest of seeing nothing, and putting our fellow news-hunters off any scent that we fancied might be worth following. We were engaged in business, in which generosity must needs give

place to justice—justice to ourselves. I cannot say that I was sorry, either for myself or for the *World*, when my service came to an end. General Sheridan paid a visit to Versailles, and naturally every American in the place lost no time in interviewing, or trying to interview, that illustrious American soldier. I say "trying" to interview: for, as an American for the nonce, I found myself one of a crowd of journalists at a sort of informal *levée*, and I had not been an American long enough to have acquired more push than I have by nature—which is none. After the formal handshake I was reduced to silent speculation on the pronouncedly Mongolian type to which the General's features belonged. But I did better than that, after all: for, by overhearing the name of "Maclean" pronounced close by, I discovered what had hitherto been the proverbial needle in the pottle of hay—the veritable, though vanished, correspondent of the *New York World*. I forget the reason for the stoppage of his correspondence; anyhow, he was as ready to resume the duties of his post as I to resign them.

One need not have seen a small fraction of a battle—and no human eyes, though aided with the best of field-glasses, can see more—in order to realise victorious invasion. I did realise it, in

many a ruined and deserted village, or half empty and wholly demoralised town ; at the sight of troops of homeless peasants, women mostly, conveying, as best they could, their young, their old, their infirm, and other burdens without conjecturable goal or aim ; in the general epidemic of helpless dejection ; among the swarm of nondescript and cosmopolitan speculators who followed in the invader's wake for whatever pickings might be found. My homeward route was along the main line of the German advance ; and not a returning train but bore its freight of wounded men. No : one need not see the fighting to see something, nay much, of war.

My very last visit to Paris was two years later, when the work of the Commune was still plainly to be seen, and the City of Light had not even yet recovered from its gloom. I did not catch a smile on even a British face when a French guide, showing a party of tourists round Notre Dame, pointed out the spot where—according to him, though not to history—Archbishop Darboy had perished "praying for his Executors." I felt quite disappointed that he did not add "Administrators and Assigns."

CHAPTER XII

The *Globe* in the early 'seventies—Dr. Mortimer Granville —"Tom" Purnell, *ultimus Bohemorum*—John Churton Collins

My journalism at home had hitherto been represented by some half-dozen "social" leaders in the *Echo* and the *Star*, edited respectively by Arthur Arnold and John Morley. Shortly, however, after the Franco-Prussian episode my legal career was brought practically to an end by an engagement, requiring daily attendance at the office, to write "Notes of the Day" for the *Globe*. The editor of that paper, Dr. Mortimer Granville, had not yet succeeded in raising it to the position that it reached during his reign and afterwards maintained; but he made one feel that he was not the man to fail, though it would have been exceedingly difficult to state a reason for so hopeful an impression. He was the most unknowable person that I ever knew (I am conscious of the bull); notwithstanding our daily relations, he was as much a mystery at the end of them as at the beginning. All that we of his

staff knew, or thought we knew, of his previous history was that he had practised medicine somewhere in the provinces; of his present life, nothing. He seemed to be entirely without associates, and nobody, in schoolboy language, knew him at home. How he stepped out of the consulting-room of a country doctor straight into the editorial chair of a London evening paper was presumably no mystery to the *Globe's* owners; at any rate, they could not have chosen their man better, as the leaps and bounds by which the paper prospered plainly showed. Yet he could not be classed among the "strong" editors. He was a veritable bundle of excitable nerves. I have seen his big frame literally of a tremble, and his sallow complexion grow yet more sallow, before having to face a meeting of the Directors; and his tempers during the daily production of the paper would have sent the members of his staff crazy had they been half as nervous as he. Being who and what we were, we soon learned to take his impatient and sometimes even insulting messages as among the mere ordinary incidents of the morning's work, to be either disregarded or promptly repaid in kind, and then forgotten. Indeed, it was impossible to remember such meteoric flashes in the amiable calm that invariably followed the daily storm. His secret

of success is, under such temperamental conditions, hard to conjecture; but he must have possessed that secret—among, I fancy, many others of other kinds. For, after quitting the *Globe*—I no more know why than why he came there—he returned to his original profession, and acquired a lucrative and fashionable practice, chiefly, I believe, as a specialist in nervous disorders.

The production of an evening paper was a much more leisurely affair then than now, as a subsequent connection with the *Globe* under later conditions enabled me to realise. At any rate, apart from the self-tormenting temperament of our chief, it was so with us. The small editorial staff, nominally three or four strong, but actually two or three (one having to be deducted for special and peculiar reasons presently to be shown) assembled at a not peremptorily ten o'clock in a pleasant room in the Strand with a pleasant prospect—the Chapel of the Savoy in the foreground, and, for the distance, the Surrey hills. The leading article was seldom written on the premises, but usually sent in by Pigott, the Licenser of Plays, from outside. There was always plenty of what is called inside matter in type; so all we had to do among us was to fill up three columns with "Notes of the Day";

and many of these were Notes of Yesterday, as having been written the previous afternoon. And as to pace, if we had finished by not later than half-past one, we had done very well. Anybody who will take the trouble to work out the question, If three men fill less than three columns of neither small nor close type in three hours and a half, what is the rate of speed per man? will, I am sure, though I have not myself done the sum, acknowledge that, in speaking of the pace as leisurely, I have not fallen into misdescription. We had, in fact, plenty of time for discussing our "Notes"—and other things as well.

But I have said that one of our strength on paper had invariably to be deducted in practice. And it was invariably "Tom" Purnell, who had a truly marvellous talent for getting his work done by others. Mr. Comyns Carr, who was also one of us, tells, in his Reminiscences, how Tom would turn up, looking the picture of misery, complaining of a racking headache, and beseeching us to supply his notes, sending them up, of course, as from him; for no notes, no pay. Nobody had ever the heart to say No; indeed, he was off and away before he could be refused. But when the morning's work was over, there returned an entirely different Tom;

jaunty, cheerful, in all the happy consciousness of money earned and duty done. And the trick, however regularly repeated, never failed. It was not, however, such a novelty to me as to Carr, for I had known him and had been occasionally among his amused victims for years; ever since I had met him in Pump Court in company with B. T. Williams, who had known him from when both were boys. His journalistic pay—I dare not call it work—was not confined to the *Globe*. He was also "Q" of the *Athenæum*, and considered himself unfairly injured when that pen-name was adopted by another "Q." He reviewed books, and sometimes plays, for the *Sunday Times*: my solitary specimen of dramatic criticism was the result of a visit to the Princess's as his unpaid deputy. He also contributed a weekly London letter to a country paper; as to one of which there is a characteristic story. Having got two of his press friends to write it for him, they treacherously concocted a wild tissue of outrageously incredible Royal scandal, and forgot, until their joke was past recall, to tremble for the probable result of it to Tom. To their amazed relief, he came to them beaming, with a highly complimentary letter from the editor of the paper, asking for more in the same style. Strange, however, as it may seem,

incredible to any who remember him, I can vouch for his authorship of at any rate one article, for I witnessed its production. He had promised an obituary notice of some one of whom he had special knowledge—I forget who it was—for the *Law Magazine*. On the evening of the day when it was due he came to me in Pump Court, without the notice, but with a promise for to-morrow. I knew what that meant; so I insisted on his not leaving the room till the notice was in my hands. He pleaded for five minutes' leave of absence in order to get a preliminary drink; but I knew what that would mean, too. In short, I was for once in my life inexorable, and maintained a commanding position between the writing-table and the door while he, after a sigh of resignation, did actually and visibly turn out the promised notice then and there. Few men have anything so remarkable to boast of as getting copy out of Purnell.

He was *Ultimus Bohemorum:* the last of the Bohemians. For I do not count among that fraternity those who play at what they like to think Bohemianism by way of a pose, or the hangers-on of literary and artistic clubs for the sake of advertisements or half-crowns. Purnell was a true-born Bohemian, without ambition, foresight, or purpose: he lived for the day, or

rather for the hour. He certainly did most energetically advertise, but never himself—always his friends: and never, though he must have been in very narrow straits at times, did I know or hear of his "borrowing"—so the process is technically termed—so much as a farthing. He used to boast of being "the poorest man in London": and it is true that his pockets were chronically empty. But then, on the other hand, his wants were singularly few, and those few cost little, some of them nothing, to supply. His tastes and pleasures were inexpensive and so little refined as to argue deficient sensibility. To music he was virtually deaf: to pictures at any rate purblind: and I doubt if he possessed organs of taste or smell save in the most rudimentary form. I suppose it would be an exaggeration to suggest that he could not have told a pint of Guinness from one of Clicquot, or the flavour of the finest Habana from what he termed a "draw"; but I am sure that he would be equally content with either. He was not intemperate; he did not play; he could not justly be said to dress; he lodged, I should say very cheaply indeed, over a small shop in the Camden Road; he belonged to no clubs; and he could indulge his ruling interest in theatrical life at no cost at all, for there was probably not a theatre of which

he had not the freedom both before and behind the scenes. His frail figure with its eager, forward pose, his keen, restless eyes, not less bright and piercing when the flowing hair and pointed beard had turned to white from brown, were familiar not only there but in painters' studios, newspaper offices, and gatherings of literary coteries. His social range was without bounds, and I think that he not only regarded all his world as a stage, but himself as stage-manager. In that capacity he certainly engineered the historic meeting of Swinburne and Mazzini at Karl Blind's: and—though here the amount of historic certainty may require discounting—never did his slightest acquaintance become in any way distinguished without his declaring "I'm the poorest man in London, but I made him (or her): he (or she) would be nowhere if it hadn't been for me." Never was creature so innocent of envy, or so sincerely happy in the success of a friend. In that finest of senses, his friends' successes were truly his own.

How he came to hold his unique position in literary, artistic, and theatrical London must have been due in some measure to this talent for sympathy. Wholly to this, perhaps: for I can account for it no otherwise. He never spoke of his early life, but I have heard that he had tried

to keep a school at Tenby, whence he came—a strange sort of a schoolmaster he must have been!—and he had begun life in London as Secretary to the Trustees of Dr. Williams's Library. Presumably the office required some degree of punctuality and other attention to business: and any degree, however small, would very speedily become intolerably great to Tom Purnell. At any rate he soon left the Library and became the free lance that I knew so well.

With the queer inconsistency of many a man who refuses to believe in anything that he does not think he knows, he had a stock of superstitious observances. He had, or professed, a conviction that there was some occult connection between himself, the hour of midnight, and the colour blue. Consequently a bright blue necktie, on all occasions, was as distinctive a feature of him as his eyes; and at the height of the most eager or the most thoughtless night-talk he would fall into an anxious silence if, and while, he heard a clock strike twelve. Another fancy of his was to carry his week's wage straight from the *Globe* office to a neighbouring tavern where he was known, and to change it as evenly as possible into five-shilling pieces, a supply of the coins being kept ready for his expected call. Some early association, however, probably suffices to

explain his visit to a church exactly once a year, namely, on Easter Sunday, and there to join in the Easter hymn. It was the last thing one would expect of him ; but rather than forego that function I believe that he would have let his blue necktie be torn away.

I have already mentioned Comyns Carr as among our editorial staff. My recollections of him are uniformly pleasant ; but as he is, happily, a fellow-survivor of those Mid-Victorian days, and has published his own reminiscences of them, I must salute him with a very cordial bow and pass on. Would that I could thus salute among our fellow-survivors another colleague whose pathetic death some five years ago moved many hearts when it happened, and many more when the whole of his life-story was told—Professor John Churton Collins. Of course he was no professor then, but a young enthusiast fresh from Balliol, so saturated with the poetry of Greece and Britain that it overflowed. With little encouragement, or indeed with none, he would burst into a declamation of some speech or chorus from Sophocles, evidently and touchingly taking for granted that we revelled in its sound and sense as fully as he. He had a prodigious memory ; but, like most people so gifted, was apt to trust it too implicitly, as one incident plainly

showed. He had written what we called a "Turnover" (an article over-running the last column of the front page, so that, in order to finish it, a reader must turn to the next), showing how frequently common quotations are mis-quotations. That was easy enough, for one of his wide reading and ready memory. Unluckily, however, the greater number of his corrections were as incorrect as the mis-quotations that they were meant to be-pillory. Painful were the ensuing letters from correspondents each of whom was pleased, in one instance of mishap or another, to be able to correct the correction, and to catch the *Globe* tripping. I certainly never afterwards heard Collins charged with inaccurate scholarship: so he may have learned, by this experience, that verification of references is not more important than of quotations.

CHAPTER XIII

The "Decemviri"—Algernon Charles Swinburne—James MacNeill Whistler—Joseph Knight—The Marston circle—Dante Gabriel Rossetti—William Morris—Dr. Richard Garnett—Astrology—Philip Bourke Marston—Oliver Madox Brown—Louise Chandler Moulton—"Fiona Macleod"—Arthur O'Shaughnessy—"Nelly"—Mrs. Lynn Linton

Among the incidents of Tom Purnell's general stage-managership was the formation of a small society in which no two members should represent the same Art or Profession. We called ourselves the "Decemviri," as limiting our number to ten; in fact, we were never more than nine, a vacancy being purposely left in case of some future overwhelming claim to be of our company. Our only rule was to dine together not less often than once a month either at some restaurant or at the house of some member who could conveniently entertain, with unlimited licence for irregular meetings. We had neither president, nor secretary, nor treasurer; indeed the latter would have been an especially superfluous office, because we had no subscriptions. The place and date of each meet-

ing were settled at the close of the preceding, and information thereof forwarded to an absentee by any one who would volunteer for that exceptional duty. Poetry was represented by Swinburne; painting by Whistler; criticism by Joseph Knight; the stage by Dominick Murray; architecture by Jekyll, in rising repute for ornamental design—"Jekyll of the Gates" was his regular designation on account of a work that had won special attention; journalism by Purnell; fiction by myself; law by B. T. Williams; medicine by Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson, who had not yet entered upon his anti-alcohol crusade. . . . Of all the nine I alone am left alive.

Among our systematic informalities was that we kept no minutes or any record of our meetings. This, though it made for ease and freedom, I now regret, since an account of a club of such a sort, counting Swinburne and Whistler among fewer members than one's fingers, would be interesting in fuller detail than I, its only potential historian as the last of the Decemvirs, can, in my notelessness, now supply. There was good talk among us—how could there fail to be where those two met, and with Joseph Knight there also, whose talk was yet better than theirs? I am, alas, no Boswell, or it might be that the fame of *our* club might run that of *The*

Club hard. How far my recollections have been turned by time into a rosy twilight, of course I cannot know. Yet, even though the rose-light be extreme, I am not sure that we could not quite well have held our own against our historic rival. The eloquence of Burke and the humour of Goldsmith are by no means conspicuous in such table-talk of theirs as has been handed down, and we were free from any Johnsonian oppression. Then, too, we were by our very constitution exempt from the besetting vice of purely literary coteries, as I heard it illustrated, at a gathering of one of them, by the novelist David Christie Murray. "I keep my good things for my books," said he, in his weightiest way. "Then, my dear Murray," instantly retorted Byron Webber, "why on earth don't you put 'em there?"

The first meeting of the Decemviri was held at a French restaurant—I forget its name, and if it still exists should be unable to identify it—in Old Compton Street, Soho. In the same quarter we continued to meet, unless at Whistler's in Chelsea, or at Knight's in Camden Square, or, more frequently, for Sunday supper at the Dominick Murrays' lodgings in the Hampstead Road. I have put the last surname in the plural because, though we were an essentially male

society, Mrs. Murray always presided at her own table, and nothing would have been farther from our pleasure than the withdrawal of so good a comrade when her duty as hostess was done. She was Miss Josephine Fiddes on the stage. I have none but the kindliest memory of her, save for one incident beyond the pale of pardon. She was a warm-coloured brunette, with hair as black as hair can be ; and one Sunday evening, on entering the room, I was appalled to find it, not suddenly grown white, but transmuted to brilliant gold. The fashion of golden locks for actresses, and their imitators, was just setting in ; and had carried her away.

The Decemviri never dissolved. I *am* the Decemviri. Nor is it possible to fix a date at which they ceased to meet. No meeting can be called the last, because none was so considered. But there were two points in our constitution that made for certain though, in our case, long-postponed decay. One was the limitation of our number. Our very title, "the Ten," prevented us from receiving new members unless to supply vacancies; and there might not be a single vacancy for half a century to come. The other was the very reason for our existence—that we should be of different vocations, so far as some unavoidable overlapping allowed. This, though

it brought us the better together at first, inevitably tended to separation as our lines of life more and more diverged. Opportunities, and then possibilities, of coming all together at a given place and given time gradually grew rarer and rarer, until we ceased to be comrades, while in no case ceasing to be friends. And then, when vacancies did occur, should we have had the heart to fill them? I think not. After all, when I wrote "I am the Decemviri," I wrote wrong. Counting ghosts, there are eight more. And anything more intensely, more immortally alive than a Ghost no memory of mine can conceive.

I saw but little of Swinburne in after years; and from what I have read about him in the way of descriptive portraiture, either his personal appearance must have considerably improved with age—as indeed very frequently happens; or else the portrayers must have idealised pretty freely, seeing the poet's reflection in his outward form. At that time there was something femininely feline in his features, narrowing downwards from a good breadth of brow to a feebly receding chin; the eyes said nothing, and the thin lips smirked rather than smiled. His voice and manner were gentle, even deferential; yet one could not but be aware that their softness concealed a claw even before having read a page of his vitupera-

tive prose, in which the savage scratch always seemed emphasised by a furious scream. We, at any rate, knew only his amiable side; and, despite the claw under the glove, I do not believe that he really had any other. When one can versify like him—and if there have been greater poets, he is unapproached as a versifier—one must needs versify; and if one can scold like him, I suppose one must needs scold. Good sense is not essential to good verse, nor malice to angry words: and what fuller amiability of nature can be evident than in hero-worship and baby-worship combined? Strength and helplessness alike made to him irresistible appeal.

An unfailing stimulant to lively talk and good spirits was the gay *nonchalance* of Whistler, never so coolly gay as when the hot water in which he delighted to find himself was beginning to boil. In conversation he was piquant and amusing rather than witty, but he was invariably those, and he had a quaint language of his own, neither English, nor French, nor American, but composed of all three in the matter of accent, and, in that of syntax, of none. He rejoiced so much in anything like a battle that I think he would have liked to be on both sides at once, had that been possible. I remember his saying once, when talk turned on the American Civil War,

that he was for the North out of his veneration for the Flag—as if he venerated anything in the universe!—and for the South because its cause represented the "Divine right of Rebellion." No doubt he was thoroughly in earnest about his Art, but he as certainly posed, even about that, in the *rôle* of *moqueur*. I object to French words when one is trying to write in English: but they cannot be avoided when Whistler is the theme. We did not touch upon politics much or often: upon the party politics of the day I think never. They did not seem to us either interesting or important. From Swinburne's point of view, as an ardent prophet of Mazzini and Victor Hugo, they were necessarily trivial. Whistler's party of course consisted of Whistler. Knight's was the French stage. Purnell had transposed the old toast and sentiment, "Measures, not men," into "Men, not measures," and, adopting the latter reading as his maxim, called himself Tory because he preferred Disraeli's personality to Gladstone's. Williams inconsistently combined rather antiquated Radicalism with a disciple's admiration of Carlyle. The politics of the other four, myself included, I do not remember, if I ever knew.

Of Joseph Knight I continued to see a good deal after the dormancy of the Decemviri: what

delightful company was his the many who still share the latter memory of it need not be reminded, while those who never knew it cannot be told. He radiated geniality, whether with a single companion or, as he loved to be, and as all men, and all women also, loved him to be, the centre of a crowded room. I was never a playgoer, but my occasional visits to theatres under his guidance are among the pleasantest of my recollections. It was with him that I saw Aimée Desclée, of too brief career, who showed me what acting *can* be, and thereby raised my dramatic standard too fastidiously high for ordinary enjoyment. If her consummate art were the rule, I must have become a playgoer, instead of feeling more or less dissatisfied with the best that cannot be hers. Such visits would be followed by another to the Arundel Club, whose evenings scarcely began till the theatres had closed, and never ended till the hours could no longer be called small. Knight was nowhere more in his social element than there. He was the most essentially clubbable of men.

From the little circle of the Decemviri lay but a single step into the large one centred by Dr. Westland Marston. His Sunday evenings, or rather Sunday nights, in Northumberland Terrace, Regent's Park, were for long the regular

rendezvous of a set too numerous to be called a coterie. Knight was rarely if ever absent; Purnell was a frequent and Swinburne an occasional visitor; so my own introduction was in the natural order of things, and thenceforth my finding my way there whenever I had nothing, and often when I had something, else to do. I was much fascinated by the glamour of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poems, and here I now and again met their poet, who *looked* his poetry, as Swinburne did not, and as William Morris certainly did not, whose comical figure with the mop-head was also met there now and again. I cannot say that Rossetti's presence was enlivening. My most representative recollection of him is of his sitting beside Mrs. Morris, who looked as if she had stepped out of any one of his pictures, both wrapped in a motionless silence as of a world where souls have no need of words. And silence, however poetically golden, was a sin in a poet whose voice in speech was so musical as his—hers I am sure I never heard. Morris was bluff and jovial; and had I been informed that the reputed poet of "The Earthly Paradise," Socialist agitator, artistic printer, and designer of wallpapers was in reality a merchant-skipper, I should not have been a whit surprised. The reader will be kind enough to understand that I am but recalling

superficial impressions, and that the extent of my acquaintance with either was not sufficient for adding anything to what others have written out of fuller knowledge.

I suppose that nobody ever used the reading-room of the British Museum for research or study during his superintendence of it without incurring a debt of gratitude to Dr. Richard Garnett for material and valuable aid. There really seemed no department of human knowledge in which he was not a qualified guide, and his service as such was as ready and willing as the consequent calls upon it were unsparing. He had married a near relation of Marston, and, living no farther from Northumberland Terrace than Primrose Hill, seldom missed a Sunday evening. My own special interest in him was due to my having taken to dabble in Astrology, in which he was an adept and a thoroughly convinced believer. I had entered upon the study of that venerably ancient art for amusement and out of curiosity, and though I had fallen, as a matter of course, under its fascination, I never attained to the state of a true believer. None the less, some experiences among the horoscopes of my friends presently began to act as warnings that I might possibly be playing with edged tools; at any rate that the play might prove to be

considerably more than merely play. Among my consultants was Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, the American poetess, who asked me to cast and judge the horoscope of another poet, Marston's blind son Philip, in whom she was deeply and warmly interested. I consented to make the experiment, on condition that he should know nothing of the matter. She obtained for me the necessary data, and I found, clearly enough, that he, then a strong young man, sound in health, and with apparently as good a life as could be wished for, would die in a certain month (February, I think) within two years. No prediction could seem less likely to come to pass, and none could be more precisely fulfilled. In the predicted month of the predicted year Philip Bourke Marston died. Nor could it be a possible case of the effect of such a prediction upon a timid nature. Philip, had he known of it, would have treated it with robustly scornful ridicule; and, in fact, he did not know of it. Mrs. Moulton kept the horoscope and the secret too. Another consultant was a lady, well connected and of good position, with every apparent prospect of a happy and prosperous life, and no suggestion, either in her circumstances or character, of any imaginable peril. Her I had to tell, in as veiled a way as might be, that unless

she soon escaped from a certain evil personal influence, unknowable by me, she was destined to total and irretrievable ruin. Once more, nothing seemed less likely : nothing ever came more true. She had to escape from England in order to escape from English law.

These and some slighter successes led Garnett to regard me as an adept, or in the way of becoming one, and he gave me some papers on the science of the subject, contributed by him to its literature under a pen-name, that assisted my growing determination to leave the Stars alone. If the theory of Astrology was baseless, to attempt its reduction to practice was as much waste of time and labour as trying to square the circle. If, on the contrary, its fundamental principles, as Garnett went far to convince me, were sound, nothing can ever be more dangerous than the erroneous application of true principles to practical affairs ; and more or less erroneous any such application of astrological principles cannot, in the vast majority of cases, fail to be. I certainly failed to die at my own destined date, namely, within the six months either preceding or following my forty-second birthday, and my amount of faith fell very far short of Burton's, of " The Anatomy of Melancholy," who is reputed to have taken his own life rather than falsify the voice of

the stars. On the other hand, from the fact that those twelve months were the only period of continuous ill-health that I have hitherto known, they may be regarded as at any rate a partial justification of my prediction, prevented from being complete by the oversight of some obscure but material aspect or some error in calculation : upon such well-nigh unavoidable mischances does the most careful judgement of the most accurately constructed horoscope depend. But then again it may be rejoined that forty-two (the "lesser climacteric" as it used to be called) is a notoriously hazardous age with regard to life and health ; a common crisis requiring no special mention. This, however, being a volume of reminiscences, not of opinions, I will return to its proper topics, only palliating my temporary fall under the fascination of the Zodiac and the Planets by pleading more considerable examples than mine. I began with Garnett : a no less convinced student of Astrology was the late Fitzgerald Molloy, the voluminous and popular author in the field of biographical history, also a frequenter of the evenings in Northumberland Terrace, who consistently regulated his life in all its details, great and small, by its instructions. When I last saw him, about four years ago, he told me that he was warned against

bringing out his regular annual volume during that year. And it happened to be the year in which he died. After all, allowing the Science all that its disciples claim, with a large discount for unavoidable oversights and errors in practice, it was not very satisfactory (from one point of view) for me to be told that I was going to die when I was only going to be unwell, and for Molloy to be merely advised to postpone publication when the warning meant that he was to die.

After what I have been saying on this subject, I may possibly be suspected of having been, if only for a moment, victimised by the epidemic of interest in occult matters that swept over the mid-years of the Victorian reign, and expressed itself in all sorts of fantastic fashions—mesmerism, table-turning, spiritism, planchette, crystal-gazing, telepathy, clairvoyance, and such like, as to which I neither have reminiscences nor think it worth while to have opinions, beyond a very strong one of the need of strict observance of the rules of evidence and of the constantly reckless disregard of them. There is nothing occult or mystical about Astrology. That is as purely an affair of rule and reckoning as Astronomy—the irreproachable daughter of a disreputable though still fascinating mother. Of

course I have assisted at the dancing of furniture and at the vagaries of planchette. It was impossible, at one time, to go into company of any sort without being bored by one or the other. And I remember, at Cambridge, a big and solemn Pole, Zamoiski by name, who once held a sort of informal mesmeric *séance* in somebody's rooms. The results of his experiments were not memorably impressive; and when he held me with his glittering eye, and made his magnetic passes, I, though unresisting, was no more affected than the chair on which I was sitting. For the rest, I have never taken part in any spiritistic exhibition, or seen a ghost, or anybody who convinced me that he or she had actually seen one; or interviewed a clairvoyant; or stared into a splash of ink or crystal ball. As to all such things I am a Gallio: or rather, perhaps, too much of a mystic by nature to give ready belief to the possibility of spiritual experiences obtained through the bodily senses and in material form.

To return, however, to Northumberland Terrace on Sunday night. Another poet was of the household, whose death I have mentioned, even as it happened, before its time—Philip Bourke Marston, the blind poet of "Wind

Voices," "All in All," and "Songtide," and his father's only son. He had not been born blind, but had lost his sight through an injury to his eyes while still a child, and was in other respects a man of many sorrows, fated, though no more than thirty-seven at the time of his own death, to be the survivor of all his dearest friends save one, and then to cause the like sorrow by leaving to yet more solitary survivorship the father who, but for him, had already by then been left alone. At the immediate time that I am recalling Philip had suffered a blow from which I think he never wholly recovered by the death of May Nesbit, to whom he was engaged to be married: and this in the freshness of the success of his earliest work, "Songtide." But he still as yet had his loving and beloved mother, and his devoted sister Cicely who lived only for him, and the friend of his heart, Oliver Madox Brown, the precocious genius who was a mature poet at fourteen, wrote the story of "The Black Swan"—published, and considerably spoiled by recasting, under the title of "Gabriel Denver"—at sixteen, and would have finished "The Dwale Bluth" (the deadly nightshade) had he not died at nineteen. I wonder if those two powerful novels, strangely powerful from so young a pen, have readers now. They had plenty then. Oliver was half-a-dozen

years younger than Philip—a long separation when it lies between sixteen and two-and-twenty, but negligible in their case, for in all respects that matter the boy was older than the young man. Indeed I doubt if Oliver had ever been a boy: nobody thought of regarding him as such: while I am sure that Philip would never have wholly ceased to be one had he lived to twice his age. The two mingled but little with the rest of the company, but mostly sat together in Philip's special den, comparing the criticisms and enthusiasms that filled their minds. The death of Oliver was Philip's second great sorrow; and even as his first had come with the success of his first book, so came this with the completion of his second.

I must anticipate the third and the fourth that were, with others of lesser magnitude, crowded into his few years. The third was the loss of his mother. But the deepest and bitterest was the sudden death of his sister Cicely, who, as I have said, lived for him alone, with whose hand he wrote, and through whose eyes he saw. That the characteristic note and persistent burden of his poetry is the inseparable union of love and death, can scarcely, under so much experience of the apparent truth of note and burden, be set down as merely morbid. But I have also referred

to one friendship of his that was to endure to the end. It was that of Louise Chandler Moulton, the American poetess of "Swallow Flights," already mentioned in connection with my astrological adventures. I shall probably mention her some few times more, as she became a very dear friend of my own. Indeed she holds so large and intimate a place among my memories that she should naturally occupy a corresponding space in their chronicle. So I will at any rate abridge that space by refraining from literary criticism of the graceful verse that has gone to so many hearts and homes in our country as well as in hers, and has stayed where it has gone. Apart from what she gave to the world, her personality was full of interest and charm. Never had poetry so passionate a lover. It was her life—I might almost say her religion, such consolation she found in it throughout a life that was far from happy. I used to think her rather indiscriminate in her admirations, and too readily subservient to reputations, especially if they were accepted by her circle. But she rarely failed to justify her liking by reading or reciting a poem or passage in dispute with such a sympathy as to bring out unsuspected beauties. I especially remember a walk one evening along Thames Bank (as I wish the stupidly styled Victoria

Embankment had been named) when some depreciatory remark of mine set her off into a poetical declamation that lasted from Charing Cross to the Temple, and part of the way back again : one recitation leading to another until the original question was forgotten. She did not talk much, or brilliantly, and made no effort to shine : she attracted chiefly, I think, by a sweetness of manner, and by a sympathy with persons, as well as with poems, that was unmistakably and indeed demonstrably sincere. Attract she did, beyond all question : women and men alike felt the influence of her quiet charm. When I first met her at Marston's she was beginning a residence of some years in London after a period of continental travel during which she had made the acquaintance of Mallarmé and others of the then youngest school of French poets, whom she also included in the circle of her admiration—a circle without circumference, as it seemed to me. But the work of others, however intense her appreciation of it, had no perceptible effect upon her own. This, if too delicately sentimental for strength, was never without distinction : her own personality, and none but hers, was evident in every line. Indeed her work is so much herself that to know *it* is much the same as to know *her*. The melancholy ; the sense of loneliness ; the

desire, without the power, to fix a belief; the dread of the grave as the unresting-place of a conscious soul, were only too real: I doubt if she ever wrote, or could have written a verse that was not the expression of an actual mood. No doubt in this absolute sincerity of her poems lay a good half of the secret of the success of their appeal to the multitude of likewise lonesome, timid, and unsettled souls.

Yet "lonely" must seem a word of strangely inappropriate application to a woman so surrounded with warmly affectionate friendships as was she. Her return to Boston did not appreciably interrupt them, for she never let a year pass, not even that which was but too apparently to be her last, without a visit to England for at least six months of the twelve, and for five of the six to London. During these she certainly was not left alone, and her own receptions on Friday afternoons were the very opposite of solitude. There was literally no notable author or artist, British or American, whom one would be surprised to meet at them. I seldom attended them myself, because of my inveterate dislike to a crowd of any sort; but I continued to see her frequently, and to combat, as best I could, the sad self-consciousness which, without seeming cause, weighed upon her more and more from year to

year. But ever more and more in vain: for the cause was her own temperament, against which it was necessarily fruitless to contend. I wish she could have been but half as happy as she was amiable and kind. She would then have been a happy woman indeed. I have not seen the memoir that has been written of her, but am sure that the best informed biographer cannot have known a tithe of her charities, too generously to be always wisely bestowed; and her judgments were as generous as her alms. She was indeed charitable in the broadest sense, even beyond reasonable bounds. She seemed to think that nobody but herself could do wrong.

Among others whom she knew the most intimately, and of whom I consequently saw a good deal at one time, was "Willy" Sharp, best known to fame as Fiona Macleod. And here I must make, in my character of critic, a humiliating confession. When it was whispered about, long before it was known, that Fiona was Willy, I was of those who altogether scouted the notion as utterly absurd. I knew him well enough to see the unlikelihood of the identity of an industrious and capable man of letters, working along all the ordinary lines of verse and prose—so industriously prolific indeed as to have, one would think, no time for another existence—with the supremely

feminine incarnation (inumbration it turned out) of the Celtic Muse. I ought to have known him a great deal worse—or else impossibly better. On the other hand, I cannot share in the solemnly nonsensical theory that Sharp's body was actually and without metaphor the abode of two separate, independent, and violently contrasted, if not mutually antagonistic, souls. There was about him a considerable dash of the *gamin*; and, as *gamin*, he would enjoy the mystification—not to call it hoax—in the spirit of mischievous fun. That it required genius to carry the mystification out, is true; but then he had humour besides. I know he had the gift of being at once able to laugh in his sleeve, and hold his tongue. I think I have already met in print with the trick he played upon an enthusiastic admirer of Fiona who wrote her (care of her publishers, her private address being secret) a request for her photograph: how Sharp gratified him with the portrait of an exceedingly pretty girl. I have given the anecdote in case I should be mistaken as to its having been told before, and, in that case, for the benefit of those who, knowing Sharp only through his work, are disposed to take him too solemnly. He was not only Willy Sharp *plus* Fiona Macleod, but also imaginative enthusiast *plus* practical humorist. The former combination

was unique: the latter is less rare than many people are able to suppose.

I cannot remember whether Sharp frequented Marston's Sunday nights. But another young poet—shall I never come to an end of these poets? Surely Primrose Hill must have been a misnomer for Mount Parnassus! — Arthur O'Shaughnessy, already the author of the "Epic of Women," did frequent them to very good purpose indeed, for he thus wooed and won his friend Philip's elder sister Eleanor. There were but few of the characteristic Marston traits in "Nelly." The true home of the family was a poetical cloudland: hers was just Number something (I forget which), Northumberland Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W. Her bright spirits and keen sense of the ridiculous secured for her a small court of her own, of which the language was plain prose. She was amusing, too, in other ways than talk. I have known her, for instance, suddenly discover, in the middle of a morning call, that she must have dropped her hat or bonnet somewhere on the way, since it was no longer on her hair—not in the least to her discomfort, but much to her own amusement; for she was one of the few who are perpetual jokes to themselves. Her sense of the absurd in herself as well as in others was certainly not accom-

panied by any sense of order: it must have been the extreme force of contrast that attracted O'Shaughnessy, who was habitually grave, quietly pensive, and invariably what lady-novelists term well-groomed. His duties in the British Museum related to snakes and lizards. That, however, was by no means an unpoetical interest; more obviously poetical, at any rate, than Oliver Madox Brown's uncanny affection for toads, one of which would certainly have been called his "familiar" in days when superstitions were less leniently dealt with than in these. The wedding of Arthur O'Shaughnessy and Nelly Marston was the only occasion on which I met Robert Browning, who proposed one of the toasts customary at such celebrations in very much the customary terms. Of him I can only say that I wish I could say more.

Then there was Mrs. Lynn Linton, whom I came to know well: stern-eyed and spectacled as a typical school-ma'am, and not averse, on what she thought fit occasion, from practising the part she looked so well. Her demand for logical accuracy and accurate logic was severe. "My dear," I once heard her rebuke a young woman whom she then met for the first time, and who had been handling some topic with youthful certitude—"my dear, before you venture to

express any opinion, always make your meaning clear to yourself by writing." If this course were to be generally adopted, it is to be feared that expressions of opinion, young or old, would become so rare as to bring all ordinary talk to a standstill; but to that objection she would doubtlessly have replied, So much the better. But, as I have had opportunities of knowing, anybody, but especially any woman, in doubt of mind or trouble of heart, who made the ascent to the abode nearest the sky in all London—the topmost storey (the tenth, I think it is) of Queen Anne's Mansions—never failed to find there the tenderest while the wisest and sincerest of counsel. She would have made an ideal Confessor, could only her sex have been changed and her wild theology tamed.

I must not quite omit Mrs. Craik—that is to say Dinah Mulock, whose "John Halifax, Gentleman," had been read by everybody when I was a boy. She was Philip's godmother: a very quiet, elderly lady, whom, though I do not forget, I do not distinctly remember. And, indeed, at times my remembrance of all that typically and essentially mid-Victorian circle is very like that of a long-past dream. For of the whole of the gifted family that drew it together not one remains. Father, mother, only son, both

daughters, and son-in-law—all have long been dead, with none to come after them. I suppose I must have some fellow-survivors from those Sunday nights. But not one of those whom I have mentioned is among them, and scarcely any other whose name, face, or voice I can recall.

CHAPTER XIV

Marriage—John Barnett, the "Father of English Opera"—The Abbé Liszt—At Milan in the 'sixties—Arthur Seymour Sullivan—Frederick Cowen—Mme. Trebelli-Bettini—George Grossmith—Charles Kensington Salaman—Walter Bache

I MARRIED in 1872. Rosamond, my wife, was the elder of the two daughters of John Barnett, the composer of "The Mountain Sylph," the Grand Opera with an English *libretto* which ran the then unprecedented number of a hundred consecutive nights on its production in the 'thirties, and has taken rank as a musical classic. But though it is with this work that his name is primarily identified, "The Father of English Opera," as he came to be called, was also the composer of "Farinelli," "Fair Rosamond," and "Kathleen" for the lyric stage, and is credited with a thousand songs—a number probably well below the mark. I wish he had written his reminiscences: for he had been closely acquainted with most of the musical celebrities of the earlier period of his long life of fourscore and eighteen years (1802 to 1900): and not with the celebrities of his own

Art only, for he had lived, in Paris, on intimate terms with Thackeray when both were young—of about the age at which he is represented by a French painter in the National Portrait Gallery. My wife, through him, was a second cousin of Meyerbeer and a first of John Francis Barnett, the still living composer of "The Ancient Mariner"; through her mother she was a granddaughter of the celebrated and, according to all accounts, unsurpassable violoncellist, Robert Lindley; and she was a god-daughter of the Abbé Liszt. I have his christening gift, an embossed silver cup, among my relics: and—to pass over, for the occasion, nearly all the remaining matter of this volume, I have also seen and heard him play. It was at the reception in his honour during his visit to London, in 1886 (I think), very shortly before his death. A picturesque figure he was in his old age, with the cascade of iron-grey hair falling below the shoulders, and the masterful features which, rugged, like Cromwell's, with warts and lines, gave, with the help of his ecclesiastical garb, much more the idea of some great mediæval prelate than of a prodigy of—the only descriptive word that satisfies my memory is Legerdemain. I have specially spoken of having seen as well as heard him; for without watching his fingers one would have

missed the essence of the performance: the skill with which he overcame apparent impossibilities, and *seemed* to overcome real ones. To me, at any rate, the interest of the performance consisted wholly in the personality of the player. But then I never heard him but that once; what pieces he played were then previously unknown and are now forgotten, beyond an impression that they were compositions of his own, no doubt selected as *tours de force*; and of course I was told—and probably with justice—that I ought to have heard him when *he* was young. For the praisers of the past have been with us always: and they are not always in the wrong.

To return from 1886 to 1872. My wife and her younger sister Clara—still, as Mrs. Henry Rogers, exercising an eminent authority in the musical world of Boston as teacher and writer—continued the traditions and associations into which they had been born by becoming themselves highly accomplished musicians. From their birth they were destined, and accordingly educated, for the concert room and the operatic stage, first by their father; then at the Conservatorium of Leipzig when Moscheles was its director; then at Milan under Sangiovanni. Were these my wife's reminiscences as well as my own, there would be much to tell of the Italy of the time

preceding the so-called Unity. The social and artistic circles in which the sisters found themselves were of the revolutionary sentiment that seems, by some law of political nature, to prevail among poets, painters, and musicians. It is not to underrate the strength of the popular sentiment to perceive its childish side. Certainly the revolution was not brought a whit nearer by a shower from the roof of a theatre among the audience of slips of paper inscribed with *Roma o Morte* : or by shouts of *Viva Verdi*—not out of enthusiasm for the composer, as he was disappointed to find, but because the letters of his name initialled V-ittorio E-manuele R-e D' I-talia. Somebody at home sent out to the sisters a present of a blouse apiece, of which, by some perverse ill-luck, the pattern was in yellow and black : the Austrian colours. It was in the first days of their stay in Milan, and they were as yet ignorant that to wear yellow and black in the streets of an Italian city was as prudent as flourishing a red handkerchief in the face of a bull. Their ignorance did not last long. The first time they went out of doors they were first puzzled, then bewildered, then alarmed, by the way in which they were followed, in one of the public gardens, by a gathering crowd, which presently left them in no manner of doubt that

they were themselves the objects of its attention. Matters would have gone very ill indeed had not an Italian acquaintance, a well-known partisan of the popular cause, perceived their plight and come to their rescue. "Were you mad?" he asked, when, at some peril to himself, he had brought them into shelter and helped them to hide the obnoxious colours. "Of course they took you for Austrian spies." As if an Austrian spy would advertise herself by publicly flaunting the Austrian colours! But a mob has a logic of its own.

Among the more intimate of their fellow-students at Leipzig, and the most frequent guests at their mother's hospitable supper-table there—a highly popular institution among a cosmopolitan flock of young people mostly with appetites too big for their pockets—was the future Sir Arthur Sullivan, as notable then for easy charm of manner, and adaptability to all sorts and conditions of persons and circumstances, as when he became no less welcome a guest at royal tables. It may interest some who only saw him in after years to learn that he was golden-curled in his student days, and this in spite of the strong strain of African blood that became increasingly perceptible with increasing age. He was, in fact, an Octoroon, and was accordingly subjected to

inconveniences and annoyances during his visit to the United States which permanently embittered him against Americans and American ways. I never saw much of him, for when my then future wife came home after some years in Italy he had already soared into social planes far above ours. But he never forgot, or at any rate never seemed to forget, the old Leipzig life when reminded of it by one who had also lived it; and in some talks I had with him about my supplying him with a libretto (I quite forget the proposed subject; but that it was essentially un-Gilbertian I need not remember in order to know), I thought I discovered the secret of his charm. It was the tact with which he flattered one's vanity by treating one as if of paramount and exclusive interest to Arthur Sullivan. Of course one was nothing of the kind, and knew it; but he made one feel pleased with oneself, and therefore with him.

Of at least one libretto I was already the author —that of Sir Frederick Cowen's "The Rose-Maiden," a very free adaptation from a German poem by Horn. That Cantata was Cowen's first publicly performed work, and was conducted by the composer at the age of eighteen. Since then, for many years, I was his librettist and song-writer in ordinary; and I can no more catalogue the

verse that I turned out in that capacity, poeticised by his music, than the musicians that I encountered at his father's and mother's in Warwick Crescent. My impression is that these were just—all; nor do I think the impression very wrong, except in the matter of chronology, which it altogether defies. I have tried to reduce it to something like order, but cannot, still as a matter of impression, realise any difference of date between Mme. Purepa Rosa and Paderewski, though I find that, in bare fact, the former died in 1874, and the latter did not come to London till 1892. On the whole it will be best to leave the impression of much music rendered by many performers, untrammelled by the formalities of theatre or concert-room, to its undefined haze. I do, however, remember very definitely indeed the interest to myself in meeting and hearing, off the boards, and as an actual fellow-creature, the central heroine of my sometime operatic fever, Mme. Trebelli-Bettini, *à propos* of whom I remember, too, the performance of a toy symphony in which she showed signal proficiency on the drum. George Grossmith, also — originally "Junior" as the son of his father, subsequently "Senior" as the father of his son—was very much to the fore; as, for that matter, he always was wherever I met him. He was certainly a

prime favourite of Nature in point of grotesqueness, and I think that, as a thoroughly conscientious artist, he did his best to improve her favours. I remember once, in all the publicity of Regent Street, noticing the approach of a more or less human face that seemed undergoing an extraordinary course of spasmodic grins, such that it required quite a near meeting to identify George Grossmith with the grinner. It can hardly have been his habit to rehearse effects in public thoroughfares, though it would certainly be one way of not depriving Art of the precious minutes that are its due. But I have known a yet greater master of facial expression than he—a young Irish physician who had devoted some of his attention to investigating the extent to which certain of the involuntary muscles and sinews (if that be the technically correct term), such as those of the nose or the ear, can be trained to voluntary exercise. He had so far succeeded as to be able to transform his features, at will, into those of a veritable gargoyle, caricaturing whatever passion or emotion he pleased. On the scientific value of his experiments I am not qualified to form an opinion. But they might, in bedside practice, be useful for entertaining a patient whom there was no risk of their terrifying, or in cases of lunacy, if only

the doctor could be quite sure of not being mistaken for the patient.

Sir Frederick Cowen himself is happily excluded from the scope of these reminiscences, inasmuch as he and his sisters are among the very good friends of the present as well as of the past, with this new Georgian period still well before them, and destined, I trust, so far from ever taking a place among my mere memories, to afford me one in theirs. I wish I had the same reason for excluding the genial personality of Charles Salaman, whose portion of a house in Baker Street was another musical resort, but of a more limited kind than the Cowens'—more of a definite coterie. A pianist of an exquisitely delicate and expressive touch, so natural to him as to make him scornful of systems of technique, holding that the poet of the keys can no more be manufactured than the poet of words, his teaching was unquestionably, by the evidence of results, an inspiring influence in the case of pupils with a ready-made facility of finger and a capacity for being inspired. He seemed to me to regard Music less as an end in itself than as his own personal means of poetical expression —witness the composition which will, to that extent at least, carry his name forward in company with Shelley's, his setting of the song, " I

arise from dreams of thee." As a young man with good means and introductions—he never passed through the school of Art kept by that rigorous task-mistress, Poverty—he had made a long visit to Rome. It was in the days of the old *régime*, before changes had so much as begun to forecast a shadow; yet in no wise did his race and creed affect his welcome into such presumably unlikely centres as those having Cardinals for their centres. He was proud of being a Jew, and a Jew of the Sephardim, the aristocracy of the Jews.

Mendelssohn was still the *genius loci* of Leipzig in my wife's time. But now, in the 'seventies, even in slowly moving London, the Wagnerian crusade against "Judaism in music" was spreading, and persons who wished to pose as superior were getting to feel that to admire Mendelssohn's music too warmly was no longer quite the thing. Among those who uncompromisingly held it to be not the thing at all was Walter Bache, a fellow-student of my wife and her sister, who, faithless to the spirit of his *alma mater*, appointed himself Peter the Hermit to the crusade. Indeed, he soon outran the vanguard of the revolt, for having convinced himself that the imminent triumph of Wagner was secure, he next appointed himself missionary extraordinary to the Abbé

Listz, as a composer more in need of a champion. Without any conspicuous musical ability of his own, or the least particle of ambition or vanity, or taint of self-advertisement, he threw heart and soul into the hopeless task of forcing Liszt's compositions upon a public that was still quarrelling over Wagner's. His Liszt recitals meant, I take it, throwing his purse after them; but he would not grudge that to the cause. No doubt the joy of battle was to some extent motive enough, for he was a born rebel all round, and nothing pleased him better than the fun of shocking a "Philistine"; but there could be no misreading the honest simplicity of his zeal. To hear him talk, as we often did, for he was a frequent visitor, and not more frequent than welcome, one would think that the situation was that of Walter Bache pitted against all the shams and conventions of the world. But he was an entirely lovable fellow, through and through, and when he died, worn out by sheer excess of life before he could be called middle-aged, I can answer for it that all his knight-errantry had not given him one single enemy, unless he himself were the one. The wonder is that he was not worn out yet sooner, for he was a painstaking teacher of the pianoforte, in large practice, all day; a boon companion all night; and a zealous musical missionary all the

time. He had a way of making a ride on horseback do duty for sleep between the late end of the night and the early beginning of the day. It may encourage some shy connoisseurs, who do not care to own up to an old-fashioned liking for mere melody, that so advanced a champion of the advanced school—advanced even before Wagner was in the van—delighted in Offenbach openly and without an atom of shame. Moreover, I have it on his authority that Wagner himself—and he knew Wagner well—loved above all else the *arie* of Bellini.

It may well be that Schumann was no false prophet when he declared that, whatever may be the music of the present, the Music of the Future will have been composed by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven.

CHAPTER XV

"Zelda"—Francis Hindes Groom—Gypsies at Mawgan —Charles Godfrey Leland—The Hardys—John Cordy Jeaffreson—"Joaquin" Miller—No. 84, Gower Street —Agnes Mary Frances Robinson—The Æsthetes— "Speranza"—Professor William Minto—Justin M'Carthy

At the very end of 1872 I was asked by Leslie Stephen, who had succeeded his father-in-law, Thackeray, as editor of the *Cornhill*, to write a novel for that magazine to run through the following year. I had not so much as the idea of a plot or subject in my mind: so, with a reckless courage at which I can now only wonder, I wrote the first monthly instalment without the ghost of a notion of what could or would follow. And even so it went on from month to month —and anxious months, I need hardly say, they were. If ever novel was acted out by its characters, without taking even their own author into their confidence as to what they would do next, or what would happen to them, or how they would end, it was "Zelda's Fortune." Zelda herself sprang from the title, not the title from Zelda; nor the title from the plot, but the plot

from the title. All that I seemed to have to do with the matter was that, having recently started a keen interest in Romany history and language, I had a presentiment that my leading lady would prove to be a Gypsy, and that a name so outlandish, in addition to its merits of being short, incapable of being mispronounced, and reasonably safe from any previous claim, would somehow fit her; or at any rate that she would somehow fit the name. One good "Fortune" she had—to have her story illustrated by Du Maurier. He must have received each monthly instalment of copy inconveniently late, but he never complained, and his care to render his drawings real illustrations of their texts was evidenced in a rather curious way. We had no acquaintance with him—not even so much as can be referred to a chance encounter in a crowded room. Yet when, many years afterwards, such a chance encounter did happen, he no sooner set eyes on my wife than he exclaimed "Zelda!" He had followed my description of my heroine so exactly as to have made an excellent portrait (as we ourselves had been amused to notice from the first) of one whom he had never seen, and who in no respect belonged to the type that he made distinctly his own.

The introduction of some scraps of Romany

into the dialogue of the novel brought me a letter from Francis Hindes Groom, not yet the author of "In Gypsy Tents," but already qualified for more than he ever accomplished as the most complete master that ever existed of the whole fascinating subject, in all its branches, in which he was utterly absorbed. The letter led to a correspondence, and this to a visit from him, followed by a further correspondence extending over some years, and to further visits on the rare occasions when the vagabond life that he had chosen brought him to London. I believe that he must have had some strong strain of Gypsy blood in his own veins, however little one would expect it in the son of a highly respected archdeacon; and the suspicion is confirmed by his peculiarly soft voice and sombre Southern complexion. Unlike the learned Professor A. F. Pott, of Halle, who wrote his more than a thousand pages on the Romany language without ever having heard a word of it spoken, he had lived with the Gypsies as one of themselves in many countries, and talked with them as one of themselves—only probably a good deal better. I have a big bundle of his letters, written from various points in his wanderings at home and abroad, but their topics are too exclusively philological to be of interest here. The last,

however, written from some out-of-the-world place in Hungary, concludes by telling how he had been invited by his companions there to join in a horse-stealing expedition. Whether he accepted the invitation I know not ; but, if so, any penalty that he incurred was as nothing in comparison with the result of marrying a Gypsy girl—as he did : with a speedy divorce to follow, the co-respondent being of her own tribe. I had, however, lost sight of him and touch with him before this part of his story : not with intention or for any definite reason, but in the natural course of divergent lives. Should I ever put forth my own speculations concerning the origin and language of the Gypsies, I shall dedicate them to his memory, as a pupil to a master's.

Whatever they may be worth—and, though I am entirely convinced of their soundness, they were evolved too late to obtain any assurance of my master's approbation—I shall not be altogether in the position of Professor Pott of Halle, who, as he himself told Groom, had never exchanged a word with one of the race whose language he subjected to a truly Germanic depth of learning. One experience of mine is curious, not as a linguistic adventure, but as evidence of a belief that was new to me at the time, and that I have not come across since among instances

of folk-lore. In the course of a ramble in Cornwall, early one sunny afternoon, I was accosted somewhere near Mawgan by two men who suddenly appeared out of a neighbouring thicket: one middle-aged, the other young—they might be, to judge from their dress and likeness, a gamekeeper and his son. But a moment's look showed that, while the likeness might be due to relationship, it was certainly due to identity of race, and of a race that is not much by way of breeding gamekeepers: rather the other thing. "Sir," asked the elder, abruptly, but quite civilly, and with unmistakable anxiety, "can you read?" It was surely the queerest of questions to be suddenly put, without preface, by a couple of Gypsies to a casual stranger; and all the queerer for the obvious importance of what the answer might be. "A little," I answered. "Why?" "Then you'll come! There's a poor fellow down yonder can't pass—there's none of us can read."

I looked a request to the younger man for something a little more lucid, and not in vain. It seemed that a family of the Lees (nearly all the Gypsies of southern England, are, or were Lees) was camping hard by, and that one of them was terribly ill—indeed, his folk, of whom there were two, had been told by the doctor from St. Columb that he was dying. "Hard liver"

was the name of his sickness—which would mean, I suppose, that, whatever his virtues, sobriety had not been among them. But he was in great pain, and was dying hard: nor *could* he be released from pain by death unless and until he was "read" over—and there was not man, woman, or child in the camp who knew how. So these two kinsfolk of the sufferer had been on the look-out for some sufficiently learned passer-by.

Of course I went with them to the camp. It was pitched on sward, between a copse and a stream, and was on an unusually large scale. Every generation seemed crowded together, from the crone who looked as if she had seen her hundredth birthday many years ago to the baby in arms, with every age of both sexes between. In solemn silence they squatted round a central caravan: in solemn silence they rose for an instant and curtseyed or bowed as I was brought upon the scene. Without a word my younger guide conducted me to the steps of the caravan, and then left me to enter it alone. It seemed to be taken for granted that I, who could read, would know what to do.

Not the boudoir of the most fastidious of princesses could be more ideally clean and neat than the interior of that vagrant caravan. The face of the sick man I could not see, for it was

turned to the wall: I could only hear his heavily and I fear painfully drawn breathing as he lay in his clean white shirt under a clean white sheet among clean white pillows. He did not seem aware of my presence. What was I to do, to satisfy the affectionate sorrow of the expectant crowd outside?

I believe I did what was right. Very solemnly and slowly, and aloud, so that all might hear, I said the Lord's Prayer.

I suppose I might plausibly be charged with having perverted the prayer of prayers to the support of pagan superstition. To that charge I plead neither "guilty" nor "not guilty"—I decline to plead at all. After many hand-shakes, in one case accompanied by a sob from the folds of a scarlet shawl, I went on my way. It was dark when, returning to my quarters at St. Columb, I came again to the point of the road where I had been first accosted, and naturally turned aside to make a visit of inquiry. The camp, now fire-lighted, had not shifted, but it was no longer silent. Women's voices would have served for guidance to it had there been no fires, and when I reached it, the cause of the clatter was plain; but not a man was to be seen. Grief is notoriously thirsty—is not "Thirsty grief" classically authorised by Lovelace's prison-song?

—and there would be beer at Mawgan: sorrow must not interfere with business, and there might be snares to visit in the fields. Well—I did not lack for voluble information that scarcely had I left the caravan that afternoon when the sick man died. To try to explain that he was probably at the last gasp when I saw him, and that there was thus no necessary connection between prayer and its purpose, would have been useless; against their power or will to understand. Besides, what did I *know*?—except that they, in their hearts, had prayed for a brother's release from the pain of living; that I had given their wordless wish a vocal form; and that the release had come. Coldly to explain that away! I could not if I would: I would not if I could. Probably the belief that the soul cannot achieve a difficult death without magic, that is to say scholarship, to help it, has itself died out by now. But I cannot but suspect myself of some complicity in making it die somewhat harder than it ought—at least among the Lees.

Once only was it my good fortune to discuss Romany with one of its most eminent students, Charles Godfrey Leland, not as yet forgotten as "Hans Breitmann," nor as yet fully recognised as the light-bearer of folk-lore into so many pre-

viously neglected corners of unwritten history. But the once was a whole evening long, and had some controversial zest: for he was a thorough adherent, I as thorough an opponent, of the view that refers the Gypsies to an Indian origin. Our conversation took place in the drawing-room of Lady Hardy, wife of Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, the Deputy Keeper of Records, where she, with her daughter Isa—both successful novel-writers—held a literary court of the same open sort as the Marstons, until the death of Sir Thomas brought that, also, to an end. The memory of one friendship that I made there I especially prize: that of John Cordy Jeaffreson, antiquary and all-round man of letters, whose bristles of prejudice and paradox entirely failed to hide from those who knew him the sweetness and warmth of the heart that he seemed ashamed to show. Cincinnatus—by substitution "Joaquin"—H. Miller, called the "Poet of the Sierras," was, during his visits to this country during the earlier half of the seventies, a conspicuous member of the Hardys' circle, where notable Americans were especially welcome, and, there and elsewhere, a privileged exponent of what were supposed to be wild Western ways. He was expected to be startlingly unconventional; and he was not so churlish as to disappoint expectation.

A more comprehensive circle, even than the Marstons', was that which had for its focus No 84, Gower Street, while the abode of Mr. and Mrs. George Robinson—I remember the precise address of their house, because my father-in-law was its immediately preceding tenant; because I had first seen my future wife there; and because it had been our own dwelling for the first months of our marriage. George Robinson was an expert art-collector: a connoisseur who understood both artistic merits and artistic values. But his whole collection contained nothing so attractive as his eldest daughter, Agnes Mary Frances, who has made a name, or rather three names, in two nations: first as Mary Robinson; secondly as Madame James Darmesteter; thirdly—which she still retains—as Madame Duclaux. It is many, many years since I saw her: the distance of Paris, meaning by Paris not its railway stations but itself, is not a matter of mere miles or hours. So my whole memory of her is of a beautiful girl of eighteen who—age not being a matter of mere months and years—never seemed to grow older; who, from her birth, had breathed only poetic air; and knew nothing of life but its graceful and gracious sides. Fortunately her gift was too genuine and her taste too sound to be seriously or permanently

injured in the way that was to be feared—that of the so-called "æsthetic" influence which was beginning to infect her atmosphere with its affectations at just about the time when her first volume, "A Handful of Honeysuckle," celebrated her coming of age.

The "æsthetic movement" is, and always was, the vaguest of terms, and its place and office in literary history have yet to be defined before these can be settled and assigned; but, like every "movement," it had its grotesqueries and absurdities, which were by no means mere inventions of Du Maurier, as the present generation of students of *Punch's* Mid-Victorian numbers might naturally take them to be. I have seen at the Robinsons' a youth (whose name was neither Postlethwaite nor Mawdle, though it might well have been either) carrying throughout a whole evening, in melancholy silence, a tall white lily, with whose droop he was evidently doing his best to bring his own figure into imitation. At the same house, a young woman, dressed, as it seemed to me, in nothing but an old-fashioned bathing gown and an amber necklace, whom I was asked to take to the supper-room, returned, to my inquiry of what I could get for her, the lugubriously toned answer, "I seldom eat." And these three words were all I could win from her then

or thereafter. Whether it was here that I first met Oscar Wilde, I am not sure. Wherever it was, the acquaintanceship failed to ripen, beyond occasional invitations to his mother's receptions, held in a depressing half-light, arranged to her liking, though in the day-time, by lowered lamps and drawn blinds. Lady Wilde, "Speranza" of the paper, the *Nation*, in which her patriotic verses originally appeared, was a delightfully quaint person. The twilight in which she chose to be seen seemed to be that of a dream, she being the dreamer and we the shadows, so that no oddity could come as a surprise, whether to us or to her. She once introduced my wife and myself to each other as "two clever people who ought to be acquainted." She knew us both, especially my wife, quite well, and I do not suppose that she took either of us for anybody else. We were no doubt for the moment just dream objects, without substance or name. I could find nothing better to say than "I think I have had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Francillon before."

It was at the Robinsons' that I especially remember an exceedingly interesting talk—that is to say on his side of it—with Professor William Minto, then editing the *Examiner*, who did such admirably efficient pioneer work in literary history

and criticism on scientific lines in præ-scientific times. Justin M'Carthy, novelist, politician, historian, and journalist, with his wife—she magnificently crowned with a wealth of snow-white hair—his daughter, and the son who has continued the literary dynasty as Justin the Second, were also among the most frequent of the visitors at 84, Gower Street, and were presumably in part accountable for a sentimental sympathy with Irish Nationalism that made itself felt in the domestic air. Mary Robinson's younger sister Mabel was especially attracted by the romance of Irish history, though it was as a novelist of wider range that she won immediate distinction at a notably early age. Theirs was altogether a singularly interesting household—permanently interesting in itself, and gathering all manner of varied interest from outside. While one might safely predict the friends of one's own whom one would meet there, it was impossible to hazard a guess as to the strangers whom one might encounter; from members of the Chinese Legation (two of them once sang a most feline duet) to Monsignor Capel—also in full costume.

CHAPTER XVI

The Gentleman's—Richard Gowing—David Christie Murray—Robert Buchanan—Welsh humour—Gustave Doré—Camille Barère—Karl and Mathilde Blind

THE death of Zelda—whom I had reluctantly had to poison, as the only possible solution of the tangle in which she and her fellow-characters had become involved, not by me, but by their own independence of control—was made the more memorable to myself by a call in person from Richard Gowing, the newly appointed editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, then published by Grant & Co., for the purpose of getting a novel to run through the twelve months of 1874. I had no previous acquaintance with him, but this purely business interview resulted in a close and constant literary connection fourteen years long, and in a personal intimacy that lasted without break or cloud until his death after many years more. Of all the friendships that I have made in all my life, there is none that I can look back upon with more flawless satisfaction. Do you, who are reading this, know what it is to receive a letter which you

not merely hope or expect, but *know*, from the handwriting on the envelope, will make you the happier for reading? I do, thanks to Richard Gowing, and never once was my experience at fault during an ample correspondence of quite thirty years. No doubt I must have sometimes tried his patience—what mortal author can fail to try the patience of any mortal editor now and again? But I never knew him to appear put out or worried, while on the other hand he never lost an opportunity of showing himself pleased. And for getting the best possible work out of any man who is not exceptionally ill-conditioned, I am convinced that there is no way that works so well. The certain approbation of effort, even should the effort fail, is far more likely to result in success than is any anxiety to escape blame. The excellence of my relations with Gowing was certainly not due to sympathy in matters of opinion, or even to community of interest in the same things. No two friends ever more completely agreed so completely to differ. His politics were Radical—of a rather old-fashioned type, perhaps, but therefore all the more consistently thorough; mine, during our intercourse, tended more and more to a historic Toryism, not necessarily false in principle merely because practical party politics have obscured it for a time. He

was not only, as Secretary of the Cobden Club, an official Free Trader, but a zealous and active propagandist of a cause the right and wrong whereof I, baffled by mutually contradictory statistics, conflicting authorities, and equally probable arguments on both sides, understood as little as I do now—which is just as much as the average voter: which is nothing at all. He was a Positivist: I a born Mystic, running wild until I recognised in Authority the ultimate logic of a natural need. In short, he and I together formed a signal example of the harmony of extremes.

This time I took good care not to trust my characters with the plot and conduct of my novel. I drew out a complete plan of the story, chapter by chapter, with the result that "Olympia," as the finished novel was called, was scarcely to be identified with its preliminary scheme. Those perversely wilful creatures, one's *dramatis personæ*, took themselves into their own hands after all. But I had this important amount of control over them—that they had a predetermined and irrevocable plot to work out, however impossible it was to prevent them from working it out in their own way. In any case they are a troublesome folk to keep in order. I quite recently had the interesting pleasure of discussing their management with a novelist

of to-day, and presumably of to-morrow also, Miss Marion Mole. Her principle, as I gather, is to study a person, or group of persons, whose character or characters would inevitably dictate his, her, or their story. That seems an ideally admirable method, for a novelist who can trust herself to know, with dramatic sympathy, how a man or woman of given character would the most certainly act or feel under given conditions. Mine, since "Olympia," has been just the reverse —to start from a single situation; then to evolve a story capable of bringing it about; and finally to invent the characters necessary for the action. That also is not a bad way of getting and keeping a grip over one's actors; but it has the fault of exacting a cold-blooded ingenuity which, even when most successful, is apt, in a much more important matter, to fail. Sympathy with characters originally made to order, though, as they develop, not out of the question, cannot by any amount of ingenuity be ensured. The latter method throws the main interest of a novel upon what its characters *do*; but the former upon what they *are*. I have let myself run into this digression because I believe that it recognises the existence of two essentially distinct kinds of fiction, and that much critical confusion results from condemning a novel of one kind for not

being of the other. Of course the two separate interests, the narrative and the dramatic, have, in some rare cases, been chemically combined. But, when that happens, the only proper function of a critic is to bow to the ground.

Towards the end of the year through which "Olympia" ran her course, 1874, appeared the first of the series of one-volume novels that constituted the Christmas number of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for fifteen successive years. Of twelve of these I was the sole author: of the other three I devised the plot and wrote the greater portion. In "Like a Snowball," the earliest on the list, I had for collaborateurs David Christie Murray, "Frank Percival" (the pen-name of a lady whom I never met, and whose real name I can neither recall nor recover), and "Redspinner"—who, no angler need be told, was, in private life, William Senior, sometime editor of the *Field*. Was—and is, for only the other day I met him, very much alive, and evidently without the least intention of turning into anybody's mere memory, dear to his family and friends (I cannot answer for the fishes) as so genial and manly a memory will be. Each of these contributed one of the seven chapters: I the other four. Of David Christie Murray, the author of "Joseph's Coat" and several other

popularly successful novels, I came to see a great deal. The first visit I had from him began at ten o'clock at night, and lasted till past three in the morning. Nobody else was present: I was the entire audience of a monologue the whole of those five full hours long—and not once was I bored, though I confess to a gathering fear that mere physical fatigue must sooner or later extort an inhospitable yawn. At last he rose to go. There was no apparent reason why a man who had talked without a pause for five hours should not go on talking for ten; but go he did. And "What a delightful conversation we have been having!" said he at the front-door. But it takes two, at the least, for conversation, and I know that beyond an occasional "Yes" or "Oh," or some such note of attention, I had not uttered a word.

His was certainly an unforgettable personality: and yet I scarcely know in what terms to remember him. I sometimes used to doubt if he had any character at all of his very own; whether it was not a psychological necessity for him to imagine himself somebody else, and to think and talk in accordance with his adopted rôle. He had been a fervent disciple of George Dawson, of Birmingham, and I got to know, from a certain tone of voice and other mannerisms,

when he happened to be George Dawson. On his return from service as war-correspondent at the siege of Plevna he carried some information concerning the Atrocities to Hawarden; and thenceforth certain other mannerisms and tones were obviously symptomatic of Gladstone. He was never, I am convinced, just David Christie Murray, though who he was at the moment, in less eminent instances, one could not always tell; and his talent for assimilating and reproducing tricks of speech aided this curious form of self-deception. He was, to the very life, Scotsman, Irishman, or Cockney, at will. That his novels reflected the personality of Dickens is evident beyond question. His experiences, partly set out in his own volume of reminiscences, were almost as versatile as his impersonations. Compositor; reporter both on country papers and in the "Gallery"; dragoon; tramp; now with a *château* in the Riviera, now hard put to it for a lodging in London; war-correspondent; novelist; actor—"everything by turns, and nothing long," he had three superlative talents. One was for "picturesque" journalism; another was for throwing away every consequent opportunity; a third for alienating his friends. No—he had two more. One was for never being without a fresh opportunity to throw away; the other,

that which Goldsmith ascribes to Garrick, who—

> Cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
> For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back.

I should summarise him as a medley of moods and impulses, none of which he ever controlled, not exactly out of weakness, but because it honestly never occurred to him to control them. Nor was his often eloquent sentimentality, however inconsistent with ensuing conduct, to be termed hypocrisy. It was that he was one person when sentimentalising — Dawson, or Gladstone, or Dickens, or whoever else it might be: another in action. I could not like, much less admire, *him*. But I liked his company, and that I keenly admired that picturesque journalism of his I became able to prove in a practical way.

In the Annual for 1875 I was given the collaboration of Senior for one of the seven chapters, and of Robert Buchanan for a poem to be written in such wise as to harmonise with my plot; indeed to be one of its essential portions. That part of the plan did not strike me as promising. I had never met the poet, and I was considerably prejudiced against him personally by my association with the circle of Swinburne and Rossetti. I recalled certain advice

that had once been given me : " If you are ever introduced to Buchanan, knock him down then and there. You'll have to do it sooner or later ; so it'll be best to get it over as soon as you can." Well, there was nothing for it but to send him the subject of my story, with a deferential suggestion (one does not dictate to poets) that, as the scene was to be laid in Merionethshire, he might find inspiration in the legend of the Fairy city at the bottom of the Lake of Bala. That would have suited me very well indeed. His answer is among a few letters that have contrived to escape loss or destruction ; and I give it here, partly out of vanity, partly because it is so unlike any that my mental portrait of the writer had allowed me to look for :—

" My dear Sir,—I am obliged to you for your kind letter concerning the ' Legend.' I see no difficulty just now—if any occurs to me afterwards you shall know—of incorporating in it the elements you suggest ; and the Bala Lake Tradition, too, might be utilised. But, in truth, I have hardly yet had leisure to shape the plan definitely. When I do so I will follow your views as far as I can.

" I presume Mr. Gowing has told you that the authorship is to be, and to continue, anonymous, so far as I am concerned. I have undertaken it

chiefly with a wish to oblige him and the proprietors of the magazine.

"May I take this opportunity of saying how much I enjoyed your 'Olympia'—nearly all of which I read in the magazine? Your article on 'Physiology of Authorship' entertained me greatly; but in the story I found a charm and freshness very unusual in modern fiction. I hope the 'Legend' will be worthy of its 'setting' by you; and, believe me, I am

"Very truly yours,

"Robert Buchanan."

Now how on earth could the recipient of such a letter dream of knocking its writer down? Especially as there were certain physical obstacles to the process, for Buchanan was then living in a remote part of Connaught, whence the letter was dated; and, when I afterwards met him in person, it needed no second look to show me that, should it ever come to blows between us, it was I, not he, who would come to the floor. Meanwhile, with an easy mind, I betook myself to Dolgelly to lay in a stock of local colour; put myself there under the tuition of a mining agent, so as to be accurate in the details of gold-extraction, on which the story was to turn; climbed down, for both purposes, into the depths of the Clogau Mine, then being worked for gold; and

failed to find any traces of fairies in or about Bala. But I succeeded in losing myself on Cader Idris so well that I think there must be fairies there—and of a kindly sort too, for without some such invisible guidance I must inevitably have spent a hungry night in the mazes of the mountain instead of the comfortable quarters of the Golden Lion. By the way, it was here I made the passing acquaintance of a young Englishman, a dropper-in on most days, who, in the course of a casual chat on the Welsh character generally, undertook to prove, beyond all possible question, that its most distinguishing peculiarity is the total and universal absence of even a rudimentary sense of humour. He was always accompanied by a fine retriever, coal black, and without a single white hair. "Whenever any Welshman," said he, "asks my dog's name, and I tell him 'Eira,' he invariably protests, 'Oh, but your tog iss plack; and Eira means Snow!'—Now," he went on to argue, "is there any English, Scotch, or Irish baby who would want an explanation of why a nigger is nicknamed 'Snowball,' or the biggest of Robin Hood's men 'Little' John? Anybody who can't take in such simple, elementary humour as that, clearly can't have any sense of humour at all." Any Welshman who may happen to read this will do me the justice to note that the

logic, and all else, are Eira's master's: not mine.

Not until the very latest allowable moment did Buchanan's poem arrive; and then, to my dismay, it would no more incorporate with my story than oil with water, while the story, being more than half written, could not possibly be adapted to the poem, if only for want of time. He had evidently forgotten all my requirements and suggestions, and had written "The Changeling" *à propos* of nothing but his own inspiration. I had got something infinitely better than I had asked for, seeing that "The Changeling," with its later introduction, "The Asrai," lives and will live, whereas the story of "Streaked with Gold," though the cause of its birth, has been dead and buried these nearly forty years. But I was anything but grateful at the time: especially when the absolute necessity of dragging it into the story somehow compelled recourse to the clumsy and always objectionable machinery of an irrelevant dream.

I first made the poet's personal acquaintance at a supper-party at the Gowings', which also included William Black, with "A Daughter of Heth" still but four years old, and "A Princess of Thule" only two; Charles Gibbon, who had come well towards the front with "In Silk Attire"; and Buchanan's young sister-in-law,

Miss Harriett Jay, in the first flush of the success, while she was still in her teens, of her novel "The Queen of Connaught," and now famed throughout the theatrical world as the fortunate author of "When Knights were Bold." With Buchanan himself my subsequent intercourse was rather intermittent: at some periods it was much or frequent, at others little or seldom; it never amounted to intimacy, but to amply sufficient knowledge on my part to dissipate every prejudice, and to estimate the real Robert Buchanan. The happiness of his home life was patent to everybody who entered it. He was obviously worshipped by his womankind, mother, wife, and wife's sister who held the place of daughter, with the worship not of fear, but of devoted affection amply returned. He was possibly indeed over-domesticated: it might have been better for him had he cared to mingle more in a world less absolutely his own. Gentleness and courtesy are certainly not characteristic of the legendary Buchanan, but of my recollection of him they as certainly are; nor did I so much as once hear from this literary Ishmael an unkindly word. Of envy, hatred, or malice, he was as incapable as if there were no such things. Then how came he to be a by-word for offensiveness and ferocity? That obvious question I cannot answer better

than by a quotation from a contribution of my own to Miss Harriett Jay's Life of him :

> "The right reading of Buchanan was, I am convinced, that his very genius had prevented him from outgrowing, or being able to outgrow, the boyishness of the best sort of boy. . . . And the grand note of the best sort of boy is a sincere passion for justice, or rather a consuming indignation against injustice—the two things are not exactly the same. The boy of whatever age can never comprehend the coolness with which the grown-up man of the world has learned to take injustice as part and parcel of the natural order of things, even when himself the sufferer. The grown-up man has learned the sound wisdom of *not* sending indignation red-hot or white-hot to the post or the press, but of waiting till it is cool enough to insert into a barrel of gunpowder without risk of explosion. But the boy rebels, and, if he be among the great masters of language, hurls it out hot and strong, in the belief that no honest feelings can be so weak as to be wounded by any honest words. Of course he was wrong"—

Of course he ought to have always had somebody at his elbow with sufficient influence to delay the posting of indignation until to-morrow. To-morrow would never have come.

The subsequent thirteen annuals were free

from the anxieties of collaboration, and, except in one case, from any mischance. The exceptional mishap occurred to the manuscript of "Rare Good Luck": so entitled by what must have been an ironical presentiment, inasmuch as it had the Rare Bad Luck to share in the destruction of the publishers' premises by fire. So, having no other copy, I had to spend all the following summer in re-writing the whole, as a holiday task, from beginning to end. For the rest, my connection with the *Gentleman's* was so uniformly smooth and pleasant as to give but little matter for more special reminiscence than such occasions, for example, as a dinner at which the two brothers who owned and published it were the hosts, and the only guests besides Gowing and myself were Edmund Yates and Gustave Doré. The latter's homeward way and mine lay together for most of the distance; and in the course of the walk he told me how, when he visited, for artistic purposes, a place that was new to him, he made a point of strictly abiding by his first impression. It is in the first moment, he maintained, that one gets the true character of a place or person: all further observation only confuses and misleads. His theory certainly goes far to explain his practice, even if he did not bring his first impressions with him ready made.

Another Frenchman whom I occasionally met at the Gowings' was Camille Barère. Him I chiefly remember as indistinguishable from an Englishman in English speech, unless by an un-English purity of accent and accuracy of grammar. Such an accomplishment, carried to such perfection, must I think have been unique on the part of one of a nation notorious for its complacent deficiency in the gift of tongues: though scarcely less rare, I should imagine, must be such total linguistic incapacity as that of a Frenchman whom I met at an inn at Liskeard, who, though he had lived in London for ten years, had not learned a single word of English, and, without the help of an interpreter, must have gone without his supper. How or why he came to find himself at Liskeard of all places, or how, being there, he ever got away, is among life's major mysteries. More frequent among the Gowings' many visitors, mostly of the politics that were considered daringly advanced in Mid-Victorian times, was Karl Blind, interesting for his revolutionary record, and for what one may call his position of *Doyen* among the Republicans of all nations. The interest he inspired was certainly not on the surface. Stolid in looks, heavy in manner, slow and sparing of speech, guttural of voice, with no more touch of humour than Eira's master ascribed

to a Welshman, a stranger would take him for a typical example of the popular notion of a German professor. A stranger, though I met him often, I continued to be: had I been a disciple no doubt my portrait would have acquired more warmth of colour. That stolid silence certainly concealed an unsurpassed if not unequalled knowledge of the inner history of all revolutionary Europe from 1848 onwards: a history, moreover, whereof, for aught any outsider could tell, he might still be among the makers. Meanwhile his deficiencies in merely superficial interest were amply compensated by its plentifulness on the part of his step-daughter—I think I am accurate in the relationship, though, if so, she bore her mother's second husband's name instead of her father's. Not that the interest excited by Mathilde Blind was on the surface only, as a very short acquaintanceship sufficed to prove. She was something of an *esprit fort* at a period when for a woman to be such was, in England at least, more of a distinction than a little earlier or a little later; her poetry, though, owing to her untimely death, rather of high promise than of full achievement, was characterised by a certain masculine vigour; and her intellectual attractiveness was such as to place me, when I failed to credit her with feminine charm, in a minority of One.

CHAPTER XVII

The *Tatler* of 1877-8—"Arthur Sketchley"—Swinburne's only novel—Louis Diston Powles—Twelve years' work—Novels and their titles—The "Oasis"—The mystery of Archibald MacNeill—Regent's Park Terrace—Miss Elizabeth Philp—Dr. Franz Hueffer—Ralston—Miss Sheddon—"Hugh Conway"—After-dinner speakers: Sir F. Leighton, Edwin Arnold, Hepworth Dixon—Mrs. Charles Dickens

EARLY in 1877, to which the lax chronology of the previous chapters has brought me by now, I was guilty of a blunder from the effects of which I have never wholly recovered even to this day, though it is six-and-thirty years ago. Louis Diston Powles, a barrister with a fair amount of practice in probate and divorce cases, had taken it into his head that the proprietorship of a weekly paper was a shorter cut to fortune than the Bar. I had no previous knowledge of him when I received an invitation to dinner at the St. Stephen's Club in order to discuss with him and others the prospects and arrangements of such a venture. The well-attended dinner, at any rate, was a success: and, when it broke up, I found myself pledged to contribute social and

literary articles to a weekly paper called the *Tatler*, to be edited by George Rose, the creator, under the name of Arthur Sketchley, of a then well-known and often-quoted "Mrs. Brown," and the vehicle of the opinions formed by that good lady "at the play" and on other occasions. Clement Scott took the post of dramatic critic; Richard Whiteing that of Paris correspondent; politics were undertaken by Hitchman, of the *Standard*. Finance, and the other ordinary topics of a "weekly" of the period, were in no less competent if less memorable hands, and, our proprietor being provided with capital which should have amply sufficed to carry the *Tatler* well out of its infancy, there was no apparent reason why it should not have prospered. Rose did not occupy the editorial chair for more than two or three weeks. Whether solely for bronchitic reasons, as he alleged, or whether partially—for he was a shrewd man of business—out of some instinctive prudence, he retired; and I was persuaded to succeed him. I do not think that I made a bad editor. The rest of the staff remained unchanged; but I added to the regular contributors Julian Hawthorne, Mrs. Moulton, and David Christie Murray. There was a very young lady, too, a Miss Minnie Mackay, who made what I understood was her literary *début* in the *Tatler*

with a series of light and lively "Cigarette Papers," and is now Miss Marie Corelli. And—what I considered a real triumph—I obtained a novel, to run as a serial, from Algernon Charles Swinburne. A novel—by Swinburne! *That* meant, in the 'seventies, the fortune of the journal or magazine in which it should appear. I suppose such a stroke of luck was too splendid to come off in a world where undiluted good luck seems to be against all the rules. Still I cannot but think that the bad luck which spoiled everything was too excessive to be fair. Everything depended on the announcement of the author's name; and this the author suddenly and peremptorily refused to allow. Not only so, but the secret was to be sacredly kept by Powles and myself: it was not even to ooze out: nor could he be prevailed upon to modify the condition by anything we could urge. *Sic volo, sic jubeo; stet pro ratione voluntas*—that, in effect, was his argument; while ours, namely that 'we only want your novel for the sake of your name,' was not one that could be stated in plain terms. The novel had been accepted, ostensibly at least, on its merits: so, finally, it was upon its merits alone that we were compelled to rely. What other course we could have taken, in the case of a novel that the proprietor of the *Tatler* had eagerly undertaken to publish and

pay for, is a complicated question to which I have never been able to find a satisfactory answer. At any rate nothing could have been more unsatisfactory than the answer that we did find. "A Year's Letters," by Mrs. Horace Manners, ran its course, and fell as flat as we expected. Who cared to pay threepence a week for a new serial in a new paper by a new authoress of whom nobody had ever heard? If it could only have got abroad that Mrs. Horace Manners was Algernon Charles Swinburne!—the *Tatler* of 1877–8 might be flourishing in 1913.

"If" and "might"—but I am not writing of those. Of course the secret was bound to ooze out sooner or later; but it was punctiliously kept by us, and when I was told, as a matter of literary curiosity, that Swinburne had once written a novel called "A Year's Letters," the *Tatler* had been dead for years. I do not mean to say that Swinburne's caprice was even indirectly fatal. It prevented a great immediate success; but could not have hindered the sort that is certainly slow and possibly sure. That sort was prevented by a process that is certainly sure and probably swift —a premature failure of funds. Powles was a lavish spender; the *Tatler* was but one of his expenses; and his vehemently sanguine temperament rendered him heedless of the costs and

losses of to-day in view of the big profits which, according to his calculation, must inevitably begin to roll in to-morrow. It did not take long to discover—for he was the least reticent of men—that his capital was suffering hæmorrhage at every pore, of which the paper was but one ; or rather that he was counting upon the paper to feed his capital, instead of economising his capital to nurse the paper till it could run alone. In short, he was trusting one losing concern to support a dozen others. To such a business method there could be but one end ; and I was less surprised, at the end of about a year, to learn that he had come to an end of his resources than, a little later, that he had found another capitalist to relieve him of the *Tatler* and of its liabilities to the date of the transfer. I saw the capitalist ; but nobody ever saw any of the capital. Inanition followed hæmorrhage : and the *Tatler* died.

Except myself, whose claims for arrears of salary and various expenses had been transferred, with my own consent, to the new capitalist, I am quite sure that nobody to whom anything was due was left unpaid. Powles had one—not meaning only one—admirable quality : he would beggar himself, as a matter of course, rather than not pay every penny that he owed, or that he thought he owed, or that anybody else thought he owed.

He had influence enough in the right quarters, as well as sufficient professional standing, to get sent out as Circuit Magistrate to the Bahamas; in which capacity, however, he contrived so mortally to offend the white portion of their inhabitants by his opinion of it, publicly expressed from the bench in too characteristically strong terms, that he had to be recalled. But, after all, one can afford to be one's own foe if Fortune is determined to be one's friend. She obtained for him the appointment of Probate Registrar for Norfolk, and so enabled him and his most patient of wives to pass the rest of his days in competence and ease. I do not suppose that a Probate Registry provides many opportunities for indiscretion. If it did, he would assuredly have seized them; and if he had—for our friendly and his confidential intercourse did not cease with the *Tatler*—I should have known.

The twelve months ending with January, 1878, had certainly been of what is now termed the "strenuous" order. Besides editing the *Tatler* I had contributed to its contents over thirty articles, a great number of its "Notes Current," a short story, and much other matter. During the same period I had written half a novel and a short story for *All the Year Round*; my Annual (equivalent to a one-volume novel) for

the *Gentleman's*, and a long story for the same; a story for *London Society*; four or five articles for *Mayfair*, at the request of its editor, Sir Henry Lucy—he not yet "Sir" Henry, nor "Toby" as yet M.P.; and all reviews of fiction for the *Globe*. One's own reminiscences, omitting so well-remembered a portion of them as one's own work, would be so conspicuously defective that I will deliberately give my reader an opportunity for skipping by giving the statistics of my literary and journalistic work from its outset with "Grace Owen's Engagement" in July 1868 to the end of the same month in 1880, when it takes a new and well-marked departure—that is to say for my first twelve years. The result (errors excepted) gives fourteen novels; five other serial stories; fifteen stories, each in a single number of its magazine; two long magazine articles; a hundred and twenty-five newspaper articles; eleven of what I must, out of courtesy to myself, call poems, for want of any more modest name; two cantatas and fifteen song-words for music; eight hundred and thirty notes on current topics; and four hundred and ninety-six notices of new books, mostly fiction. Most of the articles in *Mayfair*, all in the *Pen*—a literary journal conducted by Mr. Wilfrid Meynell on high principles which should have

ensured it a long career—were covered by the eighteen months that followed the *Tatler's* demise; and during the first six of these ran my novel of "Strange Waters" through *All the Year Round.* I cannot say that I deplored, for my own sake, my downfall from an editorial throne whereof the cushions had proved to be stuffed, even to bursting, with thorns. I deplored rather that dinner at the St. Stephen's, which had left me, in its consequences, only too appreciably poorer than before the soup was served.

I cannot call "Strange Waters" a happily chosen title. There seems to be little or no trouble about the choice of a title now. The name of a novel has ceased to have any necessary connection with its subject—superficial attractiveness is all that is required. We simple Mid-Victorians, however, used to suffer from a superstition that the title was bound to have some inseparable connection with subject, character, or story. It may be remembered how Wilkie Collins was put to it to find a logical as well as an attractive title for "A Woman in White"; and few of us failed to suffer in a similar way. Then there was the fear, scarcely, I suppose, yet altogether at an end, of inventing an excellent title that somebody else had, with

equal originality, invented before. I had at first intended to call "A Dog and his Shadow" by the much more appropriate and intelligible title (as I think) of "A Beggar on Horseback." Somebody, however, told me that the title had been preoccupied by James Payn. The British Museum Catalogue failed to confirm the information; but the informant was sure. So I wrote to Payn himself: and was courteously told that he had written "A Beggar on Horseback" as a serial, but that the title had to be altered on publication in book form in deference to a prior claim. Then there was the case of my "Ropes of Sand," in the *Illustrated London News*. The title was the text and very essence of a plot suggested by the legend of the demon set to the endless and barren labour of twisting into cables the sands of a sea-shore. It had, of course, been duly announced long enough beforehand; but barely a week before the appearance of the first instalment a lady laid claim to the title as by right of priority hers: and that she had thus much of customary right was easily ascertained. It was too late to change the widely advertised title without worse than mere inconvenience: much too late to adapt the story, and much of the illustrator's work also, to any new one. It really looked as if

the postponement of the claim to the very last moment had created a fix from which purchase of the right would be the only feasible extrication. By the merest accident, however, somebody to whom the fix was mentioned remembered "Ropes of Sand" in connection with the name of Leicester Warren (Lord de Tabley), from whom we learned, through an exchange of telegrams, not only that his use of the title had antedated its claimant's, but that he made it over to the *Illustrated London News* with the best of good will, so far as no yet more previous use allowed him the power. So my novel is at any rate "Ropes of Sand" the Third, and may be the Thirtieth for aught I know.

To pass from work to play—about this time a number of those who were more or less associated in the former and wished for more opportunities of association in the latter drifted into a quaint kind of club named the Oasis, as a rest and refreshment in a wilderness of work and worry. It answered its purpose very well for its score or so of "Cousins," as we called ourselves—Cousin of Ipswich, or of Cork, or of Gloucester, as the case might be—so long as, like the Decemviri, our ways lay sufficiently together. We met at stated times, usually for dinner, the place of honour being invariably

accorded to the so-called "Silent Cousin"—a human skull. This had originally been brought to one of the meetings by a medical Cousin, Dr. O'Connor, and gradually grown into this fetish-like distinction. The proceedings, though never—in those already degenerate days—soaring to the "High Jinks" of Counsellor Pleydell and his companions, were unquestionably inspired by that eminent advocate's apology to Colonel Mannering—"There are folks before whom one should take care how one plays the fool: because they have either too much malice, or too little wit." At any rate we had wit enough for nonsense; and what more is wanted by people who meet because they are tired of trying to be clever—or, harder toil still, of trying to seem so? So we e'en let ourselves go. But we had our rules, which our "Patriarch" during his term of office had punctiliously to enforce; and an elaborate Masonic sort of ritual. Our first Patriarch was Archibald MacNeill: the journalist who, while on his way back from a professional visit to Paris, was last seen just before his steamer left Boulogne, and never again. His sudden disappearance, absolutely without the slightest personal cause, remains, though anxiously and thoroughly investigated by his friends at home and by the French

police, a mystery still, only to be reasonably accounted for by robbery and murder. He was the straightest and most open-lived of men, certainly without an enemy, and, so far as the strictest inquiry could elicit, without a single care. His fate, however, whatever it was, did not befall till a considerable time after the last meeting of the Oasis, which further included among its members Richard Gowing, Julian Hawthorne, Christie Murray, and Rudolf Blind, the artist, the son of Karl. It was never dissolved; and from my five or six still surviving "Cousins" I trust I may count upon as kindly a remembrance of me as is mine of them, and of the days, or rather the nights, of auld lang syne.

This, too, seems the most fitting place for recalling to some few, now too few, other memories than my own—my wife's Wednesday evenings in Regent's Park Terrace, which for some years during the later 'seventies and earlier 'eighties were to our circle what the Sundays of the Marstons and the Hardys had been to theirs, and to some extent included theirs, by reason of considerable overlapping. Her evenings were naturally of a more musical character, and I can still hear the voices in song of Edith Wynne ("Eos Cymru"—Nightingale of Wales), whom

we had seen married to an Armenian barrister in the Chapel of the Savoy, and of Grace Damian, the young contralto, then at the outset of what promised to be a brilliant career. I am not sure whether Mme. Parepa-Rosa was ever present on any occasion, though we knew her well—Carl Rosa, by the way, had been one of my wife's contemporaries at Leipzig. My wife's sister, also, now and then sent us a musical visitor from her side of the Atlantic : notably Dr. Eichberg, the German violinist, to whom Boston had given a refuge and a home, and presently the homage of disciples to a master. His widow, still a charming young woman at over eighty, and their daughter, Mrs. John Lane, are still among my friends. Not that our music was invariably up to "concert pitch." Mr. T. P. O'Connor, a frequent and ever-welcome visitor, may remember a lady's impassioned rendering of "The Wearing of the Green." And I wonder whether any living amateur, even if lodging and boarding in the very cheapest of suburban backwaters, with a family that advertises itself as "musical," has any knowledge of the sentimental twaddle that formed the staple of the songs sung in the drawing-rooms of *our* time. If by any chance he has, he or she will know the name of Miss Elizabeth Philp, who was among the most popular offenders in that line

of business. And if so, he or she will be dismayed to learn that Miss Philp was a thoroughly good fellow, with a bluff, downright manner, and a moustache fit for a dragoon, who, at the end of an evening, and with an audience reduced to a few on whom a little frivolity would not be thrown away, would, by special request, break into—not into any stuff of her own : she had too much sense for that—but into the lamentations of " Betsy Waring," who went " out a-charing," and wound up with a realistically rheumatic yell calculated to startle the inhabitants of the neighbouring Zoological Gardens into a howl of sympathy.

I have spoken of our house on its Wednesdays as common ground of several interesting circles, and Dr. Franz Hueffer was their common point of intersection—an assertion which shows, not my ignorance of geometry, but my acquaintance with Dr. Hueffer. For he was ubiquitous : at whatever point one touched the circumference of any circle, there, conspicuously, was he. I first met him at the Marstons', where a foreigner was a rarity : how or whence he came there nobody seemed to know. Nor, for that matter, after a first moment of casual curiosity, did anybody seem to care to know. One may take for granted that he did not come to London without influential

introduction based upon solid reputation at home; but, even so, never can there have been a case of more instant and matter-of-course acceptance of a stranger on his intellectual merits alone, without any sort of prestige to herald him, or personal charm. Another man might have possessed all his encyclopædic attainments, as scholar, linguist, musician, and every advantage of prestige and personality to boot, and yet have had to spend many pushful years in achieving the position into which Hueffer stepped at once, and apparently without the slightest effort of his own. Quiet and unpretentious in manner, he never seemed to seek so much as recognition, much less distinction; but it came. I do not know that he turned his depth and width of knowledge to any public account. But there it was, and nobody thought of questioning his authority on any subject he pleased.

Among his specialities was the poetry of the Troubadours. Equally remote from common knowledge, at least during the 'seventies and 'eighties, was Ralston's, of the British Museum—namely, Russian language and literature. He once told a number of Russian folk stories to a delighted audience in St. James's Hall, among whom I remember Carlyle, old, bent, and feeble, wrapped in a shepherd's plaid, and reverently

supported to his seat by the lecturer's arm. Far down sideways had the lecturer himself to stoop to give the support so pathetically needed, for his growth had left six feet—I forget by how many inches—far behind ; but to be gracious is better than to be graceful. Ralston had inherited a claim to a great estate and fortune which, however, he did not care to pursue, whether out of a philosophic indifference to riches, or of a prudent avoidance of the uncertainties and anxieties of litigation, or of consequent interference with his chosen pursuits, or of the indolence that so often goes with an abnormal number of feet and inches, or of a combination of some or all of these considerations, I do not know. But he had a sister, Miss Sheddon, who was neither indifferent, nor prudent, nor indolent. She devoted herself to the prosecution of the claim, and it was she who, when it reached its final stage, addressed the House of Lords in a speech of extraordinary ability three whole weeks long. B. T. Williams had frequently advised her on legal points that arose during the progress of the suit, and told me that for grasp of facts, and in the mastery of complicated questions of English and Scottish law, she had not a superior at the Bar. I think my last piece of professional work was to look up one such point to which he was

unable to attend. I met her once : and carried away the impression that her brother had chosen the wiser part, and that even if she won her battle she had lost all that makes life, and especially a woman's life, worth living. As Alan Fairford wrote to Darsie Latimer concerning the case of Poor Peter Peebles *versus* Plainstanes : " I must allow that my profession had need to do a great deal of good if, as is much to be feared, it brings many individuals to such a pass." Who was it that suggested the formation of a company for bringing frivolous actions against eminent lawyers ; who, as knowing the nature of a law suit, might be counted upon to pay on demand rather than defend ?

Are there still readers of " Hugh Conway's " " Called Back "—the story in a then new manner that in 1883 at once took the whole novel-reading world by storm, kept readers, however sensation-proof they might esteem themselves, out of their beds, and was recognised by those whose business was to watch literary tendencies, as a new departure in popular fiction—and not, as many of them predicted, for the better ? One critic, who took his responsibilities very seriously indeed, declared to me that the success of " Called Back " meant the ruin of English fiction for ever. As things turned out, I think it will be allowed

that the early 'eighties did contain the date of the beginning of a revolution in the character of demand and supply. For this there were of course many reasons, some obvious, some obscure. But, looking back, with the advantage of these thirty years of later light, I am as sure as ever that "Called Back" was not only a signal of the revolution but one of its active influences, in default of which a new departure might have been postponed or have taken another form. In literary economy, at any rate, supply often precedes demand; and no historian of British fiction can afford to dismiss "Hugh Conway's" novel as a mere sensational romance that was lucky enough to get more than the proverbial nine days of extraordinary vogue. It was the last novel that everybody read and talked about; not merely the portion of everybody that has read, or the smaller portion that has discussed, outside print, the most popularly successful novel of the following thirty years. I could not contrive to care for it on its merits, though I had been acquainted with "Hugh Conway," under his everyday name of Frederick John Fargus, for some years before it appeared, and took therefore a more friendly than hopeful interest in its prosperity. Fargus was about the last man from whom one would have expected a sensation of that sort—an auctioneer, with plenty

of business, at Bristol, where his novel found its fortunate publisher; without literary connections, or any previous literary reputation. My first knowledge of him was as the writer of some little poems sent me for my opinion, and graceful enough in form and conception to be accompanied with a compliment when returned. The next step in our acquaintance was his sending me a story of which I forget both title and subject, but which, I do remember, was not in the least prognostic of "Called Back," and struck me as fit for recommendation to John Blackwood. He called on me when, soon after this, business brought him to London; and never failed afterwards to visit us of a Wednesday evening when he happened to be in town. I do not think, however, that he extended his acquaintance beyond myself thereby. For he was almost, if not quite, as deaf as a post; so that attempted introductions were only too apt to fail, when everybody else knew everybody else, and it was not easy to hear one's own self's voice at times.

Among our neighbours of Regent's Park, of whom we saw much on these and other occasions, were the Hepworth Dixons. Dixon I remember as without a rival in the difficult art, perhaps the most difficult of all arts, of after-dinner speaking. Its most prominently recognised professors were

unquestionably Sir Frederick Leighton, Edwin Arnold, and George Augustus Sala. But the first was too rhetorically florid; his elaborately polished but monotonously fluent eloquence was fitter for delivery from a platform or a pulpit than where lectures or sermons are the last things that men meet to hear. Besides, his high-pitched, rather rasping voice was irritating to sensitive ears. Arnold was too egotistical. There was one favourite point which he never failed to make —at least I must presume so, seeing that he never did fail, so much as once, to drag it into any and every speech of his that came, as not seldom happened, in my way. "When first," he used in all seriousness to tell us, "I saw the announcement of a daily newspaper for a penny, I said to myself, 'That will be either the greatest of blessings or the greatest of curses: *I* must be there!'" That, but for him, the *Daily Telegraph* might have been a curse instead of a blessing, his hearers would be allowed to conclude. My inability to recall the characteristic merits or demerits of Sala as an after-dinner speaker is some evidence, to myself at least, that he did not display conspicuously much of either—but then his reputation had no doubt been won before my time, and a reputation of that sort is harder to lose even than to gain. Dixon had the several

happy knacks of adapting himself to the occasion whatever it might be; of never giving the impression of previous preparation; of an easy, conversational style; and, above all, of knowing exactly how and when to sit down. And whoever can, with an apparently modest self-assurance, bring these principles into united practice has mastered what I have deliberately called the most difficult of all the arts that are. None of its American practitioners have I happened to hear.

Another near neighbour and visitor was the wife of Charles Dickens. Of course I have known it to be taken for granted that she was the Dora of "David Copperfield." Anything more absurd was never assumed, unless she had undergone a miraculous change of nature between youth and middle age. Without that, the shrewd, sensible, practical Scotswoman, with the hearty laugh, had assuredly never been Dora. I suspect, though solely by way of a guess, that some incapacity for unlimited idolatry, or at any rate for being blind to specks and foibles, was the real root of the matrimonial muddle; for, I suppose, not the most thorough partisan of Dickens would deny that he was too sensitively vain to put up with any less worship than that of an uncritical devotee. Of him I never heard from her the remotest word.

Next door to us in Regent's Park Terrace lived Florence Marryat, Captain Marryat's daughter, herself among the popular novelists of her day, and, among many eccentricities of character, a spiritualist of the most advanced fashion. Neighbourhood, however, did not develop into acquaintance, beyond recognition when we happened to meet at other people's houses. With other inhabitants of the Terrace we became on more or less intimate terms: David Law, the etcher; Mrs. Louis Diehl, formerly, as Alice Mangold, a pianist of distinction, then the authoress of many novels of merit, with a history of Greek philosophy thrown in—I saw the announcement of a new novel from her pen only the other day; George Neville the actor and trainer for the stage, Henry Neville's brother; Dr. Lewis, an able physician, with an interesting and far-reaching theory concerning the correspondence of the constitution, functions, and diseases of the human frame with counterparts in external Nature regarded as a single whole: every man being thus a microcosm, or complete image of the universe on a reduced scale. So, as the Terrace consisted of no more than twenty-two houses, with the occupation of more than twenty-seven per cent. of them by authors, artists, and scientists, we might be pardoned for

regarding *our* Terrace as something aloof and apart from any ordinary Terrace, Gardens, or Square. And, on the whole, I think we were corporately queer enough to merit ample recognition of our claim.

CHAPTER XVIII

The *Graphic*—Arthur Locker—The *Globe* again—Captain Carlisle, and others—The Marvin case—A small beer chronicle: Fog: Fire: "G. A. S."

THE middle of 1880 I regard, as I have said, as the date of a new departure. Even as, without definite or deliberate intention, I had drifted from law to letters, so now I ceased to be a writer of fiction who was also more or less a journalist, and became a journalist who was more or less a writer of fiction. Should any ill-natured critic sarcastically suggest that I have stated a distinction without a difference, I do not feel concerned to reply. What has concerned me is that, just as I had looked to literature to keep me going while waiting for a sufficiency of briefs, I now looked to journalism as a crutch to support the production of novels; and that in both cases alike the crutch refused to be thrown away.

I had never ceased to review all new novels for the *Globe*; and now, in 1880, I was asked to undertake the same office for the *Graphic* also. My acceptance of it proved to be the beginning

of a connection with that journal which lasted, without a single break, till I resigned it in 1912 —two-and-thirty years almost to a day. Under its five successive literary editors during that period I must have read—yes, *read*—and noticed between six and seven thousand novels, and some hundreds of other books, many of the most important of these being dealt with in long and full reviews: to say nothing of a number of Notes of the Week and a couple of stories. It was a connection on which I look back, in spite of its length, with unqualified interest and pleasure; and with all my five editors, despite all characteristic differences, I was always on the best of terms. Only the first of them, however, falls within the scope of these Reminiscences; his successors will, I trust live long enough to find time and leisure to write their own. This was Arthur Locker, who had been literary editor of the *Graphic* from the issue of its earliest number in 1869, and must therefore be credited with a share in the success that attended it from the very beginning. Whether his qualifications were such as are required of an up-to-date editor of to-day, I am by no means sure. He was of an old-fashioned journalistic school which regarded push, hurry, even advertisement, as odious as—well, as they are. But the school was not yet

old-fashioned: it was only passing out of fashion: and meanwhile Arthur Locker was among the very best of its representatives—courteous in the fullest and truest sense, which includes form as well as spirit; sensitively considerate, yet an always vigilant critic, capable of prompt severity when the quality of "copy" fell short of what he held its contributor to be capable of supplying. I remember him with a personal affection which I know to have been shared by all who knew him, and especially by all who came under his firm while gentle rule. I do not mean to suggest for a moment that the standard of journalism at its best has fallen lower than it stood in his time. New conditions require correspondingly new methods; these may be just as honourable as the old, and doubtless in most cases are. But they at any rate imply a certain loss of dignity and an openly commercial attitude from which Locker, had he lived into such changes, would have fastidiously recoiled, and to which some of us who have lived into them cannot manage to adapt ourselves kindly.

My next dive into journalism as a profession (if such it can be called) proved an almost complete immersion for twelve years. This was a return to daily work on the *Globe*, under much more exacting conditions than had prevailed dur-

ing the reign of Dr. Granville. Captain, afterwards Sir George, Armstrong, now sole proprietor of the paper, was his own editor, and it was as assistant in that capacity that I engaged myself to revise all editorial matter, and to write the leading article thrice a week besides a daily "Note of the Day." The conditions of the *Globe* had indeed changed while I had been but its reviewer of Recent Fiction. Its premises had been moved to their present position on the opposite side of the Strand; and instead of our former pleasant room, with its view of the river and the Surrey hills—now occupied by the editor of the newly established *People*—I was settled in one with whitewashed walls, with no furniture but three tables exactly alike and three chairs ditto, lighted by a window just under the ceiling, and with no view but that of a staring synchronised clock that was never a fraction of a minute fast or slow. That clock was the ruler of the room. For whereas in Dr. Granville's time we did very well if we started work at an easy ten and, without any leader to write, nothing indeed but two or three notes apiece, finished between one and two; now, work had to be started at nine sharp and finished at twelve sharp in order to catch certain trains; and to get through one's leader and one's note, on subjects never given out

beforehand, with revising work as well, and questions to answer, took up every second of the three hours. Then, for me at least, followed an hour or two of such revision as could be postponed, as of what we called "Turnovers" and "Middles." But this could be done at leisure; and fortunate I was in being able to share the leisure with such an occupant of the second of the three tables as Captain (he had held that rank in one of the Highland regiments) Thomas Carlisle.

To show what manner of man he was—"was" is a sad word to write of him—a single recollection will serve. He had once written a novel, which came to me in the ordinary course to review for the *Globe*. It was utterly, hopelessly, desperately bad; and I said so. We used to slash in those days. We liked to show how cleverly we could break a butterfly on a wheel: so we called trash, trash; instead of hailing it, according to present practice, as an epoch-making work of genius, and generally saying of it what its publishers would like us to say. The novel was anonymous. And with such bitter contempt did I treat it that Armstrong, who knew its authorship, would, out of consideration for one of his staff, have suppressed the review. It was the author himself who insisted upon its appearance,

out of deference to a reviewer who, he urged, had been trusted by the *Globe* to judge the novel, and whose judgment must therefore stand. Never had I seen or heard of Carlisle until my return to the *Globe*: nor did he know anything of me except as the ferocious critic of his solitary novel. Yet nothing could have been kinder than his reception of me into the room that we were henceforth to share. Everything he could do to ease my far from easy position he did; and it was not for some years after we had become intimate and confidential companions that he confided to me his authorship of the novel that I had so scornfully condemned. Every day for twelve years we spent from three to four hours together at neighbouring tables in the same room; and no word ever once passed between us that I would wish recalled.

Regular and punctual in all his habits as that synchronised clock, and with a military stiffness of carriage, he was the last man in whom one would expect to discover the boyish spirit that made him the comrade of his boys, sharing all their interests, not merely as an affectionate father, but for his own active enjoyment, and as if he were actually one of them—one, like Milton's Adam, of his own sons. But it was certainly this same spirit, with its dash of

adventurous frolic, rather than any professional zeal, that prompted his most notable piece of journalism in the service of the *Globe*. In order to explore some of the odd by-ways of life, he took a crossing, and stood at it, costumed for the part, and with broom in hand, in the character of an old soldier brought to that condition. He escaped the chance of recognition by any former brother-officer—the crossing was in clubland: and his receipts in pence (I forget the amount) were enough to show that a crossing-sweeper's was by no means a bad business in muddier and less municipally managed times than these. On another occasion he was one of a party of Christmas waits: an enterprise which he found required a strong head to stand one sort of warm reception on a frosty night, and ears proof against bad language in order to be content with another. His notion of a holiday was the hardest exercise he could find. A hundred and thirty miles on a tricycle in a single day must be the *ne plus ultra* of hard and utterly uninteresting labour; indeed I should have thought it impossible. Yet twice did Carlisle, when well into middle age, thus take his pleasure—sixty-five miles from Notting Hill to Stockbridge, and then another sixty-five back from Stockbridge, mostly in the dark, to Notting

Hill. If this was pleasure, as no doubt it was, then the much-abused treadmill must have been nothing less than joy.

The third table had several successive occupants, each of whom left as soon as his note was written, or whatever his work might be, so that we practically had the room to ourselves. Among those whom I remember as sitting there were Mitchell, a distinguished Oxford man, a member of the French as well as of the English Bar, a winner of the Diamond Sculls, a champion light (or was it middle?) weight, who afterwards went out to Bangkok as legal adviser to the King of Siam. His notion of a holiday was flying hawks on Salisbury Plain, of whom a hooded pair would sometimes be perched at hand, in waiting for their journey. Another was Davenport Adams, the author of a well-known dictionary of the drama. Another was Noble, a specialist on Russian affairs, whom I remember chiefly for three remarkable reasons: first, that he never spoke unless spoken to, and then in the irreducible minimum of indispensable words; secondly, that his copy never needed the alteration of a single word; thirdly, that he suddenly vanished without, as was ascertained, owing anybody a penny, but, on the contrary, with money due to *him*. It was another case of the

disappearances whereof the mystery has remained unsolved.

The editor of the *People*, then virtually a branch of the *Globe*, occupied, as I have already lamented, the pleasant room of pleasant memories in the *Globe's* old premises in the Strand immediately opposite the new. This was Dr. Sebastian Evans, concerning whom, when I made his acquaintance later, I wondered, and I wonder still, how that paper, of all papers, came to be edited by him, of all men. That a Sunday paper for the million requires, especially during its infancy, an editor of more than ordinary ability, need not be said. But it certainly does not require an extraordinarily accomplished scholar in many literatures; a fine poet of a high order; a skilled artist in colour and line; a learned antiquary who is more than merely learned: and Sebastian Evans was all these. Nor can I imagine a man who was all these as feeling at home in the editorial chair of a Sunday paper for the millions, who cannot reasonably be expected to take the smallest fraction of interest in Geoffrey of Monmouth, or St. Francis of Assisi, or the legend of the Holy Grail. The *People* has proved itself an excellently squared hole; but its first editor was assuredly a peg only too super-excellently round. He did not retain what

must have been an uncongenial post much longer than was to be looked for; and the squarest of pegs was subsequently found in Carlisle, who, however, did not quit his table at the *Globe*. Others whom I remember as passing through our or a neighbouring room on their road to distinction belong to a later date than the title of this volume covers—E. V. Lucas, C. L. Graves, and Arthur Morrison, novelist and playwright, whose "Tales of Mean Streets" were the opening of a new field of social exploration.

The *Globe*, to which I had looked to serve me as a time-winner for fiction, inevitably came to absorb me in its service. The series of annuals for the *Gentleman's*, it is true, continued for six years longer, till it came to an end with "A Christmas Rose" in 1888—its fifteenth consecutive year; but those six years, and six more, resulted in but one full-blown novel and hitherto my last—"King or Knave?" first issued serially in the *People*. I did, however, under the title of "Gods and Heroes," produce one other work of fiction; though I certainly cannot boast of the fiction as my own, seeing that it consisted of the stories of classical mythology merely retold. As may well be supposed, twelve years of daily routine were not fertile in incidents that

call for publication—among which I do not include private and personal sorrows ; such are, or ought to be, secret and sacred things. The hot water into which the *Globe*, with such amazing indiscretion, let itself tumble in what may be called the Marvin case had cooled down before my return ; but it was recent enough to be still a subject of office talk and speculation. Marvin, it will be remembered, had been employed by the Foreign Office, at the regular rate of tenpence an hour for outside temporary work, to copy the draft of a secret agreement between the British and Russian Governments preliminary to the Congress of Berlin. How so confidential a task, in a matter of which it was of the utmost importance to keep the British public in ignorance, came to be entrusted to outside and virtually irresponsible hands, is beyond guessing. The result was that the *Globe* came out with a publication, not merely of the terms of the document, which could have been explained away, but of the document itself, word for word. The utterly incredible account of the matter was that Marvin, with no more than the necessary allowance of time for his copy, and without the minutest opportunity for note or memorandum, had carried the whole long diplomatic document so accurately away in his

head as to be able to sell it to the Press for reproduction without the omission or alteration of a single word. Such a feat of memory, if not absolutely impossible—few things are—is so obviously and grossly improbable as not practically to be distinguished from impossibility. Such, however, was Marvin's own story; and, unsatisfactory as that solution of the mystery was, no member of the staff of the *Globe* when the incident happened seemed able to suggest a better. Might it not be that the Russian Embassy could have thrown some light into the darkness had it pleased? It might have been held politic to embarrass the British Government by premature publication of the agreement, which of course would be in duplicate. Marvin, too, had closer connection with Russia, where he had resided, than was usual among journalists of that time, or than the officials of our Foreign Office were presumably aware. These surmises are not supported by a particle of knowledge. But, all the same, a diplomatic stratagem is less unprecedented and more likely than a feat of memory so marvellous as to savour of miracle.

As I have forewarned the reader of this chapter, the chronicle of such few incidents of the *Globe* office as remain in my recollection is distinctly of the flavour of small beer. One

of them is finding myself one morning the sole member of the editorial staff that a dense fog, of the sort that once upon a time made London famous beyond all other cities, had permitted to arrive. That the paper did not miss its accustomed midday trains is not so miraculous as Marvin's alleged memory; but neither is it very far behind. Another morning I arrived at the office to find that it had been completely gutted by fire. During the long process of rebuilding and refurnishing the entire staff had to work at a single table, without over-much elbow-room, at the office of the *People*, then lately transferred from the Strand to Milford Lane; and it was anything but a joy to have to produce, against time, a leader on a subject seldom or never settled till a minute or so before it had to be started, with one's close neighbour on the right, perhaps, evolving wit for "By the Way," and the one on the left busy with the minutiæ of ecclesiastical affairs, in a general buzz of consultation, and liable, in the throes of some stubborn sentence, to be asked some sudden question. My third incident is memorable, at least to myself, because it gave me the only impression I have of George Augustus Sala apart from after-dinner eloquence: I wish it had been other than of Sala in a rage. The *Yorkshire Post* was defendant in an action

that turned upon a point of journalistic custom. The editor of that paper, with whom I had some slight acquaintance, called upon me in London, and, without any explanation of his purpose, got from me, in the course of a craftily casual conversation, a favourable opinion. The result was a *subpœna* to give expert evidence of custom at the Leeds Assizes; and when I reached the court I found myself in company with Sala and Joseph Cowen—*the* Joseph Cowen of Newcastle-upon-Tyne—who had both been brought to Leeds for the same purpose and in the same way. We attended a conference with Waddy, Q.C., who was to lead for the *Post*. Cowen was amiable over the matter, and repeated the evidence he was prepared to give in his soft Northumbrian burr. But Sala was furious. He had been dragged all the way from London to Leeds, at his extreme inconvenience, against his will. He knew nothing about journalistic custom nor cared; and if he went into the box he should say so. So let them put him into the box—it would be the worse for *them*! He had been *tricked* out of an opinion—"But that's Yorkshire all over!" he fired off, as he stormed away to catch the next train to town.

The plaintiff's case broke down on some point of legal practice before any witness, except the

plaintiff himself, was called. I know what has been said of expert witnesses. But, judging from what I received on that solitary occasion, for fee and expenses, all for a trip to Leeds with nothing to do when I was there, I should not object to a *subpœna* in that capacity as often as some plaintiff or defendant pleased, Yorkshire or no.

CHAPTER XIX

The White Rose of Wynnstay—Order of the White Rose —The prohibited Mass—The Stuart Exhibition—Whistler a Jacobite—Charles Augustus Howell—The Sobieski Stuarts—Rise and spread of interest in the House of Stuart—Helps to history

In the year 1710, some gentlemen of Cheshire and Denbighshire, representing the principal county families within seven miles of Wrexham, formed themselves into a professedly convivial and unprofessedly political society which they called the Cycle of the White Rose—"Cycle," or circle, because its meetings were to be held, every three weeks, at the houses of its members in rotation: "of the White Rose," because that flower was the traditional emblem of adherence to the strict rule of Royal descent as held to be of divine sanction. The badge of the House of York had now become that of loyalty to the cause represented by him whom some called the Old Pretender, others the Chevalier de St. George, others King James the Third. In course of time the meetings came, for con-

venience' sake, to be always held at Wynnstay, where, under each successive Sir Watkin Williams Wynn as its hereditary "patron," the Cycle itself became, in fact, the Jacobite Council of North Wales. But the remarkable feature of its history is that this essentially Jacobite society continued its meetings at Wynnstay without a break till between 1850 and 1860—a continuity of over a hundred and forty years: nor was it till nearly so late as 1890 that its last surviving member died. Moreover, there is good evidence that its Jacobitism was a reality long after the failure of the 'forty-five. How long, it is impossible to say; but no doubt the supremacy of its convivial over its political character would be gradual and slow. Jacobitism lingered in England as a principle, indeed as a potential force, much longer than ordinary histories tell. Did not Dr. Johnson, speaking when George III. had been on the throne for nearly twenty years, declare that "If England were fairly polled, the present King would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow"? "If a mere vote could do it," he went on to assert, "there would be twenty to one." And his Whig opponent had to admit that a poll of the people of England on the question of Right would be in favour of the House of Stuart, though putting

the majority at twenty to one might be going too far.

While the last member of the Cycle who had attended a meeting at Wynnstay was still living, provision had been made for the continuity of its tradition. In the light of recent research, conventional history was already falling into some discredit; and especially was this the case, as concerned this country, with the period from the accession of Charles I. to that of George III. Popular history is pretty certain to be written in the interest of the winning side, ignoring inconvenient truths and stereotyping convenient errors. Not that this necessarily implies any conscious dishonesty. One so-called historian used to take for granted what he had learned from another, and never thought of testing it by original investigation. The worse than merely careless omissions and misstatements of Macaulay, and the gross ignorance displayed by Thackeray in his portraiture of the young Prince in "Esmond," are but extreme examples of how history used to be written. How it ought to be written is better understood than it was thirty or forty years ago, now that all extant documents of the past requisite for research—state papers, records, and correspondence both official and private, formerly buried away, forgotten, or unknown to

exist—have been collected, arranged, and rendered accessible: the historian has to be accurate at his peril, for as surely as he commits a blunder, with or without intention, so surely will it sooner or later be spotted. A very short course of documentary study sufficed to show that the so-called history of Great Britain from 1625 to 1760 mainly consisted of the white-washing of success and the black-washing of failure. The history of a nation's past is, or should be, the foundation of its future: to base that future upon false history is to incur the doom of the man who built his house upon the sand. Moreover, justice demanded that the men who suffered for losing causes should not be condemned off-hand on the unquestioned authority of those at whose hands they suffered. To let the most leading case stand for all—King James II. may have been a bigoted and cruel tyrant, and his adherents knaves or slaves or tools or fools. William of Orange may have been a pattern Christian hero. The Revolution may have been the pure and spontaneous exercise of a patriotic people's sovereign will. Such had for generations been the all but universally accepted historic creed. "All but"—for there were already some not unintelligent persons who could not allow that "may have been" logically amounts to *was*.

They asked, How would history have been written had the Dutch invasion never taken place, and had a James the Second kept his crown, and been succeeded by a James the Third? Probably it would have been untrustworthy, as representing nothing but success; and for just that very reason, the history of success must be held untrustworthy as it stands. To get at the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the history of the Great Rebellion and the Revolution of 1688, with their intervening and immediately succeeding chapters, must, they maintained, be revised: appeal being meanwhile made to the court of an educated public opinion from the misdirections of partial or ill-informed judges. No doubt in many, perhaps in most, cases a belief in the divine sanction of sovereignty had much to do with the demand, united with a previous conviction that from the open truth of facts their belief would have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

This is a volume of memories, not of opinions; but in this matter the former cannot be intelligibly reported without some assistance from the latter. The opinions that I have thus and therefore stated represent very much what had become my own attitude towards political history and historical politics before I discovered that they

were shared by others, few, of course, but numerous enough to have reorganised the Cycle of the White Rose on lines better adapted to later times. My discovery was made professionally, through having in hand, for the *Globe*, an incident personally attractive to myself by historic sympathy. Now well-nigh forgotten, it made a considerable stir then, and, though it would be held of no significance or importance, it "caught on." In January, 1888, the late Earl of Ashburnham, in a letter to the press, drew public attention to the 31st of that month as "the hundredth anniversary of the death of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, called by some the Young Pretender, and by others King Charles the Third," and this reminder was followed by the announcement of a solemn Mass to be celebrated at the Carmelite Church in Kensington for the repose of the Prince's soul. So unprecedented a project promised to be of public interest, as proved to be the case, especially when the Mass, for some unimaginable reason, was prohibited by Cardinal Manning. Certainly Manning was a Whig; but it is of course unthinkable that a prelate of his Church refused its rites and its prayers to any soul of its communion by reason of partisan prejudice; while timidity, even had there been occasion for it, was the last weakness with which he could be

charged. The Order of the White Rose had no corporate connection with the matter. But it contained at least two or three members of the Cardinal's flock ; and from one of these, who had taken a prominent part in the announcement of the Requiem, I first learned of the existence of a Society based on the principles that "All Authority has a divine sanction, and that the Sovereign power does not exist merely by the will of the People or the consent of the governed," and that " The murder of King Charles the First, and the Revolution of 1688, were national crimes."

There is no advertisement like prohibition, as Manning, had he been a novelist, a playwright, or anybody else subject to censorship, would have known. A revival of Jacobitism got talked about. It is true that the notions of the man in the street concerning the meaning of the term were apt to be foggy. I have known several cases of confusion of Jaco*bite* with Jaco*bin* ; and Greenwood's paper, the *Anti-Jacobin*, was taken by some for a counterblast to the pretensions of the White Rose. I once met an ordinarily well-informed person who took for granted that a Jacobite was a follower of a then somewhat prominent politician of the name of Jacoby ! On the other hand was a revelation of a hitherto unsuspected amount of Jacobite principle or sympathy throughout the

country. The Order of the White Rose, having emerged, or rather been drawn, from a modest privacy into an outer and wider world, received applications for membership from numbers of persons who had hitherto imagined himself or herself to be the last and solitary survivor of an unsuccessful cause. And if the Order, thus vitalised, had done nothing else for the revision of history, no better service in the ever-needful crusade against popular ignorance and consequent injustice was ever rendered than by its conception and inception of the Stuart Exhibition that opened at the close of 1889 : at any rate, according to the view that politics, without constant reference to the still unsettled controversies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are a mere muddle. Its "Patron" was Queen Victoria, who took the keenest pride and interest in the history of her own Royal House of Stuart : for hers it was, no less than its lineal heir's, and it was owing to its being hers that she reigned, though few, except herself, seemed to realise that elementary item of dynastic history. Nor did she object to the catalogue's designation of the three last Princes of its name as James III. and VIII., Charles III., and Henry IX. No doubt the warm personal interest she took in the enterprise, as patron, exhibitor, and visitor, helped it into unexpected

fashion. That it did "catch on," and to good purpose, is shown by the best of all tests applicable to such experiments—the commercial: the three months during which it remained open resulted in a clear profit of over £2,000 from admissions, after all expenses had been paid. "Stuarts is hup now!" was the explanation of a dealer in old prints to a would-be customer who considered the price asked for one of his wares in that line inordinately high.

The amount of Jacobitism in the air naturally suggested representation in the Press; and on the anniversary of Culloden, 1890, appeared the first number of the *Royalist*, in the form of a small monthly magazine of thirty-two pages, established as the authorised organ of the Order of the White Rose. Its circulation was necessarily limited. But it sufficed for a continuous life of thirteen years, throughout all of which—with the exception of the fifth—I edited it as a labour of love, until the love, without lessening, became no longer able to carry on the labour. In the following year our maintenance of the inseparability of past history from present politics was illustrated with unusual directness by Gladstone's introduction of a Bill for removing the remaining religious disabilities, with the exception of those attaching to the Royal Family, supplemented by

Sir John Pope Hennessy's notice of motion "That it be an instruction to the Committee that they have power to insert a clause relieving the Sovereign and the members of the Royal Family from all religious disabilities." A more sentimental, but not therefore less effective, fillip was given in 1891 to the current interest in the Stuarts and their Cause by Henry Irving, who judged the state of the atmosphere suitable for a successful revival—and he judged rightly—of W. G. Wills's "King Charles the First." In connection with this, I possess an illustration of how history *can* be written, and in what extreme need it sometimes stands of being revised. This is a cutting from a leading daily paper, which tells how the first-night audience comprised the members of the Order of the White Rose wearing their "insignia," and gives the names of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Francillon as among them. Now, as a matter of fact, no member of the Order, so far as I am aware, was present on the occasion; if any was, he certainly did not wear his badge in public; and for my wife and myself I could prove an unanswerable *alibi*—she was at Cheltenham, and I at Berwick-upon-Tweed.

For that matter, no newspaper, by some queer fatality, seems capable of complete accuracy in

any reference to the White Rose. Most sweeping assertions have to be qualified by exceptions; but this is a rule without any exception that I have ever met with, or of which I have ever heard. Otherwise accurate obituary notices of the late Lord Ashburnham stated that he was President of the Order of the White Rose. But the Order has no such official as President: and he was never even one of its members, though of course, as the representative of Don Carlos in this country, he was in general sympathy with its legitimist principles, and attended, as a guest, at least one of its sessions. It does not follow that everybody who accepts some or even all of its tenets is or ever was on the roll of its Companions. There has never been the slightest secrecy about either its principles, its purposes, or its proceedings. At its discussions and its dinners—for is not the Order heir to the traditions of the White Rose of Wynnstay? and did not the White Rose of Wynnstay most diligently dine?—the guests not seldom outnumbered the members. My previous remembrance of the many-sidedness of Dr. Sebastian Evans in connection with the *People* here runs on to one of these occasions, when he returned thanks for the toast of the Guests, with whom his name had been joined. The *Royalist*, too, had much to thank him for.

There were many with us, though not of us. The only time that I met Andrew Lang was when I happened to sit next him at a dinner of the Fishmongers' Company; but that single happening enables me to report his interest in the history of the House of Stuart as by no means so purely non-political as his writings taken alone might lead one to suppose.

But there was one not merely with but distinctly of us whose membership of the Order will, I venture to say, defy the guessing of my most ingenious outside reader. When I first saw the roll of its Companions, great was my surprise to see, high up thereon, the indubitable signature of James MacNeill Whistler, with the appended butterfly, to the declaration "I affirm the principles of the Order of the White Rose." Not only so, but I presently met my co-Decemvir at one of the Sessions of the Order, and subsequently at others. He had joined the Order two years before my discovery of its existence. That Whistler held legitimist opinions will surprise most people: that he held them so strongly and definitely as to enter a definitely legitimist society will surprise them more: that so interesting because so uncharacteristic an aspect of him should have escaped the notice of even the most intimate of his biographers, is more surprising

still. Collectors of artistic curiosities are aware of the contributions from his pencil that have given a special value to sets of that eccentrically able periodical, the Jacobite *Whirlwind*, started by Mr. Herbert Vivian a few months later than the first issue of the *Royalist*, and conducted by him on militant lines that would of themselves, apart from politics, suit Whistler's own temperament down to the ground. My contribution to his biography, otherwise incomplete, is that they suited his politics besides.

What can I say of Charles Augustus Howell, whose name crops up at every point and turn of the history of Mid-Victorian art—of its inner history, that is to say, as everybody who has ever heard of Rossetti knows? Of course I have read or heard the usual stories told to his discredit: and very good stories some of them are—almost too good to be true. At any rate my own experience does not enable me to confirm them, much less to add to them. He was as much a Portuguese as an Englishman, or more: and his connection with the Order of the White Rose came about through the interest he took in the claim of Dom Miguel to the Portuguese throne—an interest that could not by any possibility be other than sincere. I suppose that, in this world of mixed motives, few persons, unless of the

apparently extinct breed of martyrs, attach themselves to a combative Cause without a bit of the gambler in their composition ; but that does not denote insincerity in the choice of the Cause. Fergus Mac Ivor vich Ian Vohr was not the less sincere a Jacobite for counting upon an Earldom as the reward of successful loyalty. I do know that, with a knowledge of human nature as well as of works of art, amounting to genius in their combination, Howell never sought any advantage to himself from his connection with the White Rose. The advantage was wholly on our side : for he was the most delightful of company, and if he never did make financial use of his fascinating personality, I can quite understand how well he could have done so had he pleased. His humour was irresistible, both in manner and in matter ; and this though one might be unable to carry any of it away. Nobody could be five minutes within its reach without yielding, however unwillingly, to its spell. I remember once going to see him on an affair—an outside quarrel of some indirect concern to the Order—which seemed to require explanation on his part, and certainly on mine an official predetermination not to be amused. I did so predetermine, and, the gift of laughter not being among my virtues, flattered myself that I should keep my resolve. But I reckoned without

Howell. *He* did not laugh. But he made, without so much as a smile, such solemn fun of the whole affair that *I* did, as never before or since, even to the extremity of aching sides. *Solutæ risu tabulæ.*

I believe that there are still a few persons who put faith in the pretence of the person styling himself the Count d'Albanie to be the son of a legitimate son of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and, as such, the lawful sovereign of these realms. At one time his believers, especially in Scotland, were not a few. He was for many years one of the sights of the reading-room of the British Museum, where he was accustomed to display his air of melancholy dignity—no professional actor could have bettered the part of a dethroned King ; his picturesque costume, frogged and furred, the more pathetically effective for the apparent length of its wear ; and the Stuart type of his features—though that is by no means uncommon, and quite as capable as other types of being emphasised by a little management of expression and hair. With these advantages, and with a literary reputation besides, it is not at all surprising that he succeeded in impressing the romantically disposed. Of the merit of his contributions to English literature and Scottish history I cannot speak, not being acquainted with them. But he was also a reputed

scholar; and I have seen a copy made by him of a Latin life of St. Margaret of Scotland so crowded with outrageously ignorant blunders, evidently of a mechanical copyist without the faintest understanding of his original or slightest knowledge of the language he was writing, as to suggest a carriage of his Royal pretences to an equality with those of the autocrat who declared that "I am the Roman Emperor, and above Grammar." It is true that his story was not to be compared for likelihood with that of Naundorf, or of any other of the Louis the Seventeenths; infinitely less so than Perkin Warbeck's. But the less likely a story, the more acceptable to a certain type of mind: and I have come across many who, while not accepting it, still thought, however illogically, that "there might be something in it" if the whole truth were known. Now there was an elderly lady, a Companion of the White Rose, who professed—and I think justly—that she did know the whole truth of the matter: she, and she alone. She had been intimate with the family of the self-styled Sobieski-Stuarts in her youth, and would willingly have believed in the claim. She could not: but out of affection for some of its members chose to have her reasons for her disbelief buried with her. It is of course unfortunate for searchers into historic side-lights that she did

not say less or more. But it is not important. When there is no evidence in support of a claim, the loss of some evidence against it need not be deeply deplored.

Miss Roberts, by the by, was an interesting person on her own account. An accident in her childhood condemned her to support a deformed and unwieldly bulk on crutches all her days. Yet I doubt if life, on the whole, was ever better enjoyed. She loved society, and she loved rule ; and she gratified both pleasures by holding a sort of court of her own, dealing out to those who did homage exceedingly plain-spoken counsel, or even commands. I cannot say that I found her attractive. But others did ; and among her most attentive courtiers and obedient subjects were quite young men. Indeed, there was youth in her atmosphere. Fifty is not too old to be young ; and at one of her gatherings I had some conversation with a well-dressed, well-set-up man whom, judging from his looks and his talk, it did not occur to me to take for over that age. But he was ; for I learned later that he would be twice fifty years old if he lived for two more. A very slight hardness of hearing could not be counted as a sign of old age, and he certainly showed no other. This was a once noted artist, Schetky, who had been Marine Painter to George IV.

Whether he lived to keep his hundredth birthday I do not know. Old age is a disease that is apt to come on very suddenly, almost in a moment, when it has been abnormally long postponed.

Should I, as is exceedingly likely, be accused of having, in dealing with the affairs and personalities of the White Rose, devoted an excessive amount of space to an insignificant subject, my apology is twofold. First—this being a chronicle of my own memories, I must needs give proportionate prominence to things and persons of much importance to myself, of however little they may be to the majority of others. Were it only for the friendships that the White Rose has given me, of which the best and closest still remain, and assuredly will while life endures, I owe the deepest personal debt of gratitude to its Order. Its interests and associations, quite apart from purposes and beliefs, have become too inseparable from all my memories since my admission into its companionship to allow of my giving them less prominence than I feel to be their indispensable due; I have certainly not given them more. Secondly, they do, after all, represent a change: ineffective, no doubt, from any immediately, or even remotely, practical point of view, but worth more attention than it has hitherto received.

Fiction is an infallible gauge of the trend of the popular sentiment of its own time. Five-and-twenty years ago a novel relying for its interest upon the romance of the Stuart Cause was a scarcely existent rarity: rarer still one that presumed any previous knowledge of the subject on the part of the reader. Scott, so far as the reading public in general was concerned, had become a classic, defined as what everybody admires and nobody reads. But such novels have, within those same five-and-twenty years, become matters of course; indeed, there has been a flood of them, of all degrees of merit or demerit, good, bad, and indifferent, occasionally hostile to the Cause of the Stuarts, as in the case of one young lady who was bold enough to defend the massacre of Glencoe, but ordinarily more sympathetic with that cause than Scott thought becoming for a Waverley, or a Markham Everard, or a Henry Morton. It is unthinkable that more than five-and-twenty years ago any of the amateur imitations of the House of Commons once in vogue would have drawn a full house for the discussion of the Act of Settlement; but when that did happen within less than five-and-twenty years ago, nobody thought it strange. How many persons, five-and-twenty years back, could have told, off-hand, who, but for that Act, would then

have been, as the lineal heir of King Charles I., the Sovereign of these realms? Who it is has by now become a matter of quite common knowledge; and not only who, but how, and why. These and such-like things may of course, and by very many will, be dismissed with a smile as passing trifles, curious perhaps, but not worth the serious regard of a live generation burdened with so many live interests of its own. But from no standpoint can it be considered a trifle that the paramount purpose of present-day Jacobitism, namely political education by historic truth—the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—has during the period made more than a mere beginning. Within five-and-twenty years ago Macaulay was the popularly accepted authority on the history of the Revolution. It is now many years since I met with any reference to Macaulay as an authority on any subject whatever. Elaborate and not far short of exhaustive studies of what may roughly and loosely, for the sake of convenience, be called the Stuart period, have poured from the Press in the form of biographies, essays, and articles in the Reviews and Magazines, based on the original documentary research without which professed history is less trustworthy than honest fiction. In the face of such a biographic mass, it would require too tedious an effort of

memory to exemplify this outbreak of the historic conscience. But it is impossible not to mention such a feature of the Stuart Exhibition year as the publication of the life of John Grahame of Claverhouse under the title of "The Despot's Champion"—a monument of diligent and scrupulously unbiased research secure, it is safe to say, from the remotest liability to any future addition or correction. Of a later date than comes within my scope is "The King over the Water," Miss Alice Shield's life of James III. (nobody can validly object to the designation of that Prince officially adopted by the Historical Manuscripts Commission throughout its "Calendar of the Stuart Papers belonging to His Majesty the King, preserved at Windsor Castle," presented to Parliament by Royal command in 1903). But I cannot forbear mention of a *great* history—"great" not merely in such an opinion as I may be qualified to express, but according to the whole body of critical opinion, however unsympathetic with its spirit. I know what time and labour the author unsparingly devoted through a long course of years to a work which she was the very first to undertake: how anxiously she verified every reference and statement; how in England, Scotland, France, and Italy she left not an available document with any possible bearing

upon her subject unstudied, nor a locality unexplored. The title-page ascribes the authorship to "A. Shield and Andrew Lang," and it is frequently referred to as the work of the latter. The fact of the matter is that Andrew Lang's share in "The King over the Water" consists of the preface only, with some amount of advice and suggestion. The whole of the research, and the whole of its written result, are Miss Shield's alone. It is curiously, and surely, significant of the increasingly wide interest taken in the affairs of the Stuarts that, whereas those same five-and-twenty years ago there was no life of James III. in existence, within that period it occurred to no fewer than four writers, independently of one another, to supply the deficiency. One was Miss Shield; another biography was published almost simultaneously; a third came out serially in a magazine; a fourth was modestly abandoned by its intending author on his learning that it had been undertaken by other hands.

I wish I had no occasion to include in my recollection of the origin and growth of popular interest in Stuart history since the later 'eighties the inevitable misfortune of every movement great or small—the antics and fooleries of its fools. There is, however, no necessity for remembering them in print: they have been

only too successful in catching public attention, and distracting it from the sane and solid work that has already been to some appreciable extent accomplished for the revision of history since the Stuart Exhibition was conceived and projected by the Order of the White Rose. What will be the result of the nearest approach to such measure of full and final accomplishment as human industry may be able to attain? That question must await further accomplishment for its answer. Meanwhile the convictions of some, and the suspicions of more, are well expressed by so observant and prescient a writer as the late H. D. Traill at the conclusion of his "Lord Strafford" ("English Men of Action," vol. viii., published by Macmillan in 1889): "The time that has passed since the Revolution of 1688 is short indeed in comparison with the antecedent period during which our own and other European nations have been growing steadily in strength and cohesion under systems which, with whatever admixture of the popular element, were in the main systems of personal rule. Popular government has had as yet but a very brief history: and when we compare the seven generations or so of its existence with the ages which preceded its establishment, we cannot wonder that so many minds are recurring to the

examination of abandoned political ideals, and that the once imposing train of believers in the divine right of Democracy is diminishing every day."

Few, however, though two hundred and twenty-five years may be in the life of a nation, there are still a good many millions of persons who regard the creeds and controversies as having long ago fallen into a practically dead slumber: as being no longer of any use or concern to a wide-awake world. "We care nothing for your dormant creed," as one of De Quincey's critics objected to his insistence upon the importance of the comprehension of seventeenth-century politics and political parties to the formation of an intelligent view of those of every later time. De Quincey's retort to his critic was: "A more unwise saying it would be difficult to devise. Creeds are eternal: if dormant, they may be recalled to life; if betrayed, they are open to revindication" ("On the Political Parties of Modern England," written in 1837).

Meanwhile the revised and corrected history of the Revolution of 1688 has still all to be written. I trust, however, that, when written, I may *not* be among its readers. The date of its production, if it be all that it ought to be, must needs be farther off than I care to wait for. Life, according to the proverb, is short; but its shortness may be too long.

CHAPTER XX

Quasi-reminiscences: political; royal; dramatic—Some contrasts—Human limpets—"Let who will be clever"—A memorable decade—Conclusion

I HAVE now brought myself to the year 1890: nor by any stretch of licence can I make the Mid-Victorian period extend a year longer. Strict arithmetic, indeed, would divide the Victorian reign into three equal portions of about twenty-one years each: the Early, the Middle, and the Late. The second of these should thus open, nearly enough for landmarks, with the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India, and close with the Congress of Berlin. I have, however, adopted the comparatively undistinguished 1890 for my *Finis* inasmuch as it happens in a very specially marked manner to be the definite point of division between my past and my present: between much that is living reality, and the region wherein Memory reigns alone. Besides, of politics and politicians, at any rate of my own time, I have virtually nothing to remember, as my previous chapters have

shown. Of Gladstone I can but say *vidi tantum*, though the vision was very close indeed. During a pause in the amateur performance of a Greek tragedy at the Westminster Town Hall, in which the leading parts were taken by Companions of the White Rose, I left my seat among the audience to visit Mrs. Cashel Hoey, also a Companion of the Order, in hers. She was sitting next to Gladstone, between whom and myself passed one of those formal introductions in which neither party succeeds in catching the other's name. I never heard him speak; nor Bright; nor indeed any of the star orators of any time, for which I am hopelessly unable to work myself up into a state of regret or shame. The only politician of historic mark whom I have more than merely seen was Charles Stewart Parnell, to whom I was casually introduced on *The* Terrace; and all I distinctly remember of him was the air of boyish fun—altogether inconsistent with all I have ever heard or read of him—with which he said to a parliamentary colleague, "Let's go in and rile old Raikes." Never but once did I see Queen Victoria. She passed the *Globe* office on her way to open the new Law Courts, but I was not fortunate in my solitary experiences of Royal aspects, for, despite all the reporters of her progress along a route

thronged with her loyal people, nobody could ever have looked more utterly sulky and bored. History does require revision : even the daily history of one's own time.

Of the stage also it will have been gathered that my reminiscences are scanty. Of actors or actresses off the boards I have met but few. Dominick Murray of the Decemviri I have already mentioned; Miss Glyn (Mrs. Dallas), Adelaide Neilson—beautiful exceedingly—and Ada Cavendish were of the Marston circle, and the last-named especially we came to know well : Hermann Vezin, Henry Neville, George Grossmith, also already mentioned : these, I think, exhaust the list of the more notable names from among those who, being dead, are still publicly remembered. Nor, though my theatrical recollections started so promisingly with Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews, is my list much longer of those whom I have never seen but on the stage. I cannot speak either as habitual playgoer or critic ; in this matter I cannot even carry out my purpose (and I have no other) of reflecting the distinguishing tastes and features of my Mid-Victorian time, inasmuch as, while so essentially of it in all other respects, in this I was the rankest of unsympathetic outsiders. I could hear Leah deliver her curse dry-eyed amid

a surrounding flood of tears, and see Buckstone wink without a smile. The effect of the various Hamlets, Charles Kean, Fechter, Irving, Wilson Barrett, and the rest, has been to make me very much of Charles Lamb's opinion "that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any dramatist whatever." I am quite willing to admit that my lack of sympathy with the Mid-Victorian stage—of its later periods I know practically nothing—was owing to some natural defect of my own. But I am not sure: I have recorded my impression of Aimée Desclée. And I have moreover some recollections of Ristori and Salvini that provide me with the plausible apology of having fastidiously set my dramatic standard too high for attainment save by one or two in an age. Still, it is but an apology for a misfortune: for a misfortune it is to be discontented with less than some ideal perfection that one has no right to look for.

If I had fallen asleep on, say, my eighth birthday, and not been roused for some sixty years or so, the change in my surroundings that would have struck me most, so as literally to throw all others into the shade, would not have been any of the big things by which we measure

Progress in one direction or another. It would be one that short memories cannot imagine, and that even long ones have generally forgotten how to realise, so gradually and silently has it happened, and so regularly, as to a matter of course, have we at once adapted ourselves to every step of the change. It is the homely, every-day matter of artificial light. Nothing makes me so doubtful of my continued identity with myself as an attempt to take a sudden and single backward bound into the darkness of other days. In well-ordered and well-to-do households, by no means behind the times in their arrangements, the nursery or schoolroom was considered sufficiently illuminated by a solitary tallow candle that every few minutes required snuffing—a process which frequently meant snuffing out. In the drawing-room, a pair of composite candles, attended by a snuffer-tray, gave what was thought enough light for reading or needlework at the round table in the middle of the floor. It never occurred to anybody to want anything better, so long as there was nothing better to want. As in many other matters, we were just as happy without what it would make us very unhappy to be without now.

Another institution which probably leaves the

balance of happiness unaffected one way or the other is what has come to be called the week-end "habit" among whole classes that would no more have thought of forming it in Mid-Victorian time than of taking a flight through the air. It is not among my impressions that the classes I have in mind, such as the ordinary professional and commercial, were consciously restless and unhappy once a week from Friday to Tuesday. And, in close connection therewith, it was once upon a time, incredible as it must now seem, found quite possible to have no Golf and yet miss nothing. I doubt if I had ever heard it mentioned, I am sure I had no idea of what it was, until led by circumstance in which it had no part to the links of St. Andrews. The ordinary man of middle age, without means or opportunities for sport, had practically no substitute for it in outdoor games at all, unless a bowling green happened to be within easy access—not a common chance—and so to inspire a possible liking for bowls. Indeed the ordinary middle-aged man was rather disposed, in the days before golf and lawn-tennis, to look upon all outdoor games as being all right for schoolboys, but otherwise as childish things, for grown men to put away ; and even school games were coldly tolerated, in official appearance at least, as re-

grettably unavoidable concessions to youthful idleness and frivolity. And, however it may be with the man of middle age, I am quite sure that there has been, under changed conditions, an immense improvement in the manners and customs of the British boy since I was one of him. We seldom, if ever, now meet with the shy lout, or the systematic rebel, *hostis humani generis*, or the bully, or the bully's victim, or the foul talker, or the mere loafer, or the self-assertive prig, each and all of whom I remember as quite common types of Mid-Victorian boy. The type of his Edwardian and Georgian successor—and my impression is confirmed by all I gather from experienced and competent observers—is a courteous, sensible, modestly self-confident personage, refined in manners and speech, and quite agreeable company for anybody of any age who does not find in total lack of originality a tendency to bore.

The restaurant "habit," too, throws recollection back to when it was virtually non-existent, if only for want of opportunity for indulgence. For a woman, the pastry-cook's; for the ordinary man without a club, or too far from it if he had one, the Cock, or the Cheshire Cheese, or Pym's, or Prosser's, or Simpson's, to name only such few of the resorts for a hungry but respectable

bachelor as occur to me at the moment—that was the recognised rule. Or if he was a bachelor of enterprise, he could seek, and find, gastronomic adventure about Soho and Leicester Square. But a place where the two hostile sexes could reputably as well as amicably meet for a real luncheon or a real dinner was distinctly *not* the rule. Everybody knows what is both the rule and the custom now, and I have nothing to say in favour of the old system except that a bachelor, permanent or temporary, who knew his way about, could dine under it to his heart's desire, as to both meat and wine, though on a hard bench in a dark "box," on a carpet of sawdust, and where such an innovation as a table-napkin was unknown.

In short, we Mid-Victorians were an essentially home-keeping race, whenever we had a home to keep. It is true that we carried out a great deal of colonisation. But we were not globe-trotters, taking us all round. When we left our homes, or no-homes, here, it was usually to make homes elsewhere, with only the vaguest, if any, prospect of return. It is on the lower, and therefore broader, social levels that the distinctive character of a given period is best displayed, and whereon its extreme illustrations are therefore to be looked for. There was, in the early 'sixties, nothing

extraordinary in the case of my gyp at Trinity Hall, who, though an elderly man, had never been in a railway carriage. It would be more than extraordinary were there any such gyp now. There is a certain quarter of the Royal Borough of Kensington called Notting Dale, or the Potteries, where the title of Woman is unknown—"Me and another Lady" is a common example of the proper form. Two or three years ago I happened to become acquainted with one of these Ladies of the Royal Borough, a very estimable lady, willing, and almost able, to get through a day's charing at nearly eighty years old. She was still quite able, as well as willing, to take care of a husband well over eighty, terribly crippled with chronic rheumatism for more than thirty years, but a fine old fellow still, who liked to tell how, in what I gathered had been rather a stormy youth, he "drank hard, fought hard, and worked hard"; how he had never known toothache, nor lost a tooth except one in a fight; and how he could still draw a nail out of a boot with the others. But that is by the way. The point is that the Lady had been born in Notting Dale, had been married in Notting Dale, and had never set foot outside Notting Dale, scarcely indeed beyond her native alley, once, save for a single outing at the Crystal Palace, during the

whole of her nearly fourscore years. She could not read, nor could her husband; she had never had more than that one solitary glimpse of wood and water; her whole world consisted of one single, sordid slum. Yet she was a good, shrewd, sensible woman—I beg her pardon, lady—even a wise one, if contentment be really as wise as was once supposed. Other Victorians, too, I have met in her class who, Londoners born and bred, had never seen, nor cared to see, the Thames. And much higher up the social pyramid, say midway, a holiday of Continental travel was rare. Those who did travel, for business or pleasure, no doubt got to know the countries they visited better than is at all usual at present. They did not find a little Britain ready for their reception in every town. But then, on the other hand, they had but few opportunities for the study of railway stations and hotels.

"Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits." Were our wits homelier, when we were young, than the wits of those who are young to-day? I think they were. We were not a clever folk. We had plenty of cleverness among us, of course: but it was not plentiful enough for promotion from exception to rule. It *is* the rule—now. So extensively diffused is it as to render its occasional absence, not its normal presence,

observed. In no previous period has the average of cleverness been anywhere anything like so high. In literature, in art, in music, in drama, in journalism, in scientific research, in mechanical invention, in games, in advertisement, even in philosophy—but there is no occasion to catalogue the departments of human activity in which cleverness can be displayed: for it is daily being displayed in all, to an extent that creates a fogy-like feeling in those whose lines were cast in a generation of narrower interests and slower brains. Even the clever fool, though he was always more or less in evidence, has become perceptibly less rare. John Blackwood used to say that it was "a—confounded—clever thing to write a novel at all." (I have taken the liberty of weakening his epithet.) If it was—confoundedly—clever then, it must be—confoundedly—clever now: and so, considering the enormously increased rate of production, now that not to have written a novel is a distinction, how—confoundedly—clever a whole generation of novelists must be!

Yet, after all, "cleverness" is not a term of high praise. Nobody calls Shakespeare a "clever" dramatist, or Virgil a "clever" poet, or Newton a "clever" mathematician, or Beethoven a "clever" composer. While "clever" is

opposed to "stupid," it is also inapplicable to Greatness. There seems indeed a decided inconsistency between the terms: and not only between the terms, but between the things. It is quite possible to be great without being at all clever: it is certainly quite common to be exceedingly clever without being in the least degree great. And I think that the direct influence exercised by Carlyle, Newman, Ruskin, Maurice, Darwin, upon their own generation, and continued by process of development into ours, corresponds more closely with what all of us feel to be meant by Greatness than anything of the sort that has been experienced in later times. It may be that we were then more liable, through our deficiency in cleverness, to be intellectually impressed; but then it may be because of what nobody will question—that there is at present nobody great enough to be greatly impressive. And even in the matter of my own "idle trade," as it has been idly called, I suppose that any list of English novelists of permanently high distinction would certainly include the names of Thackeray, Dickens, Charles Reade, George Eliot, George Meredith, Anthony Trollope, Bulwer, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, Wilkie Collins. Some two or three of these were unquestionably great: the greatness of others will be a matter of

opinion : but all were at least eminent enough to make memorable a certain Mid-Victorian decade wherein were conspicuously represented all eleven names. The new novels of 1851–60 included "Esmond" and "The Newcomes": "Bleak House" and "A Tale of Two Cities": "It is Never too late to Mend": "Scenes of Clerical Life," "Adam Bede" and "The Mill on the Floss": "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel": "The Warden" and "Barchester Towers": "My Novel" and "What will he do with it?": "Villette" and "The Professor": "Hypatia": "The Woman in White." A few more years would have brought in Mrs. Oliphant, and Blackmore's "Lorna Doone."

I began these recollections by maintaining it to be everybody's duty to contribute his personal impressions to the atmospheric record of his own time, regardless of their importance, though little or none. It is, after all, of the ordinary lives of ordinary folk that the characteristic atmosphere of any period is composed : the lives of great men tell us but little of their times. The theoretical duty has, on the whole, proved a practical pleasure, so far as memory can ever prove a pleasure in a parti-coloured world. And my concluding remembrance of a certain literary decade warrants me in

claiming for the title of Mid-Victorian novelist no small honour, while ascribing to the whole period an atmosphere which, as second to none in every vital quality, was good to breathe :—

Je ne suis pas la rose; mais j'ai vécu près d'elle.

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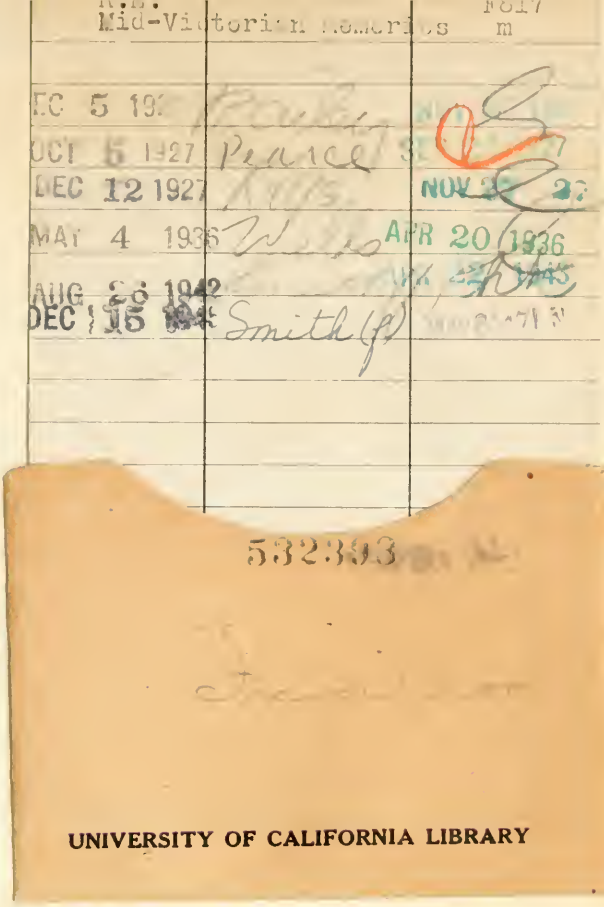
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